

**KIN STATE'S YOUTH, PARTY MEMBERSHIP, IDEOLOGY, AND
CONFLICT UNDERSTANDING: YOUTH IN ALBANIA ON ETHNIC
ALBANIANS' CONFLICTS IN KOSOVO AND IN MACEDONIA**

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Sabanci University

Spring, 2013

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ABSTRACT

KIN STATE'S YOUTH, PARTY MEMBERSHIP, IDEOLOGY, AND CONFLICT UNDERSTANDING: YOUTH IN ALBANIA ON ETHNIC ALBANIANS' CONFLICTS IN KOSOVO AND IN MACEDONIA

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Conflict Analysis and Resolution Program, M.A. Thesis, 2013

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Youth are important political actors and through their party membership they may contribute to either peace or conflict. Youths engaged in political parties might also influence kin state's approaches towards its kin groups. Their understanding may shape youths' contribution and approaches towards peace and conflicts.

This study attempts to explore the understanding of youth in the kin state concerning their kin groups' conflicts. In this research, the focus is on the understanding of youths who are members of political party youth forums in Albania, on ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia. Specifically, youths members of four political youth forums in Albania were interviewed. Adding the interviewees done with a control group of youth not engaged in any political party's youth forum, a total 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviewees were selected via snowball sampling and text analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. In this research political ideology appeared as an important factor that might influence youths' understanding of their kin groups' conflicts. Moreover, youth with nationalist ideology supported the nationalist approach and youth from the parties that were not based on the nationalist ideology supported the cooperative and peaceful approach towards their kin groups' conflicts. Additionally, the need for more inclusion of youth in Albanian politics appeared. This study suggests that inclusion of youths without nationalist ideology in politics would bring more positive contribution to the resolution of their kin groups' conflicts, and inclusion of youths with nationalist ideology may bring negative contribution, due to their support to the nationalist approach.

This research has theoretical and practical implications. The theoretical implication focuses on enriching the literature on the factors that can influence youths' understanding of peace and conflict and adds to the literature knowledge on the influence of political ideology on youth's understanding. The practical implication lies at providing knowledge to the governments to validate the potentials of youth with a vision of peace and be aware that political ideology of youths might shape their attitudes and behaviors toward peace and conflict.

Keywords: kin state, kin group, youths' understanding, ideology, youths' party membership, nationalism, troublemaker, peacemaker, ethnic Albanians, Kosovo conflict, Macedonian conflict

ÖZET

Gençler (gençlik, genç nüfus), siyasi katılımları ile barışa veya çatışmaya katkıda bulunabilecek önemli siyasal faktörlerdir. Siyasette aktif olan gençler, devletin akraba topluluklarına karşı olan yaklaşımlarına da (önemli derecede) yön verebilirler (yaklaşımlarını etkileyebilirler). Onların algılamaları, gençlerin barışa ve uyuşmazlığa olan katkılarını şekillendirebilir.

Bu çalışma, gençlerin kendi akraba toplulukları ile ilgili algılarını araştırmayı hedefliyor. Araştırmanın odak noktasında, Arnavutluk'ta siyasette aktif olan gençlerin, Kosova ve Makedonya'da etnik Arnavutların uyuşmazlıkları ile ilgili algılarıdır. Özellikle, farklı dört partinin gençlik kollarında (forumlarında) üye olan gençlerle görüşmeler (röportaj, mülakat) yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelere, siyasette aktif olmayan belirli (sınırlı) bir grubun mülakatlarını da ekleyerek, toplam 14 yarı-yapılandırılmış (biçimlendirilmiş) görüşme (interviews) yürütülmüştür (tamamlanmıştır). Elde edilen verileri analiz etmek için görüşmeler snowball sampling yöntemi ile seçilerek tekst analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırma'da, siyasi ideoloji, gençlerin, akraba topluluklarının uyuşmazlıkları ile ilgili algılarını şekillendiren önemli bir unsur olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, akraba topluluklarda olan uyuşmazlıklarla ilgili, milliyetçi partilerde üye olan gençler: milliyetçi yaklaşımı; diğer partilerin üyeleri ise daha çok işbirliği ve barışçıl yaklaşımları destekledikleri görülmüştür. Bunun yanında, gençlerin Arnavutluk'un siyasetinde daha fazla katılma ihtiyacı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışma, akraba topluluklarının uyuşmazlıklarının çözülmesi için, milliyetçi ideolojilere sahip olmayan gençlerin siyasete katılmalarını daha olumlu buluyor. Diğer taraftan, milliyetçi yaklaşımları destekleyen gençlerin ise, uyuşmazlıkların çözülmesinde olumsuz bir etki yapacağını öngörüyor.

Bu araştırma, hem teorik hem uygulamalı içermeler (implications) bulunduruyor. Teorik (kurumsal) içermeler, literatürün, gençlerin barış ve uyuşmazlıkla ilgili olan algılarını etkileyen faktörleri inceleyerek zenginleşmesinde odaklanıyor. Ayrıca, ideolojik siyasetin, gençlerin algılarının üzerindeki etkilerinin anlaşılmasında literatüre katkıda bulunuyor. Uygulama ile ilgili içermeler ise, hükümetlere, barış vizyonunu gençlerin potansiyellerini daha etkin kullanma yollarını gösteriyor. Ayrıca, gençlerin ideolojik siyasi düşüncelerinin, hükümetlerin barış ve uyuşmazlıkla ilgili politikalarının oluşmasında etkili olabileceğini gösteriyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: akraba devlet, akraba topluluk, gençler, algılar, siyasi parti, ideoloji, milliyetçilik, barışçıl yaklaşım, milliyetçi yaklaşım, etnik Arnavutlar, Kosova uyuşmazlığı, Makedonya uyuşmazlığı

To my family,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I want to thank from the deepest of my heart my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Betül Çelik for the encouragement, motivation and support that she has given to me during this research. I appreciate a lot her guidance and academic advice throughout the research and writing process, leading to the successful achievement of this thesis. I am grateful to her for the patience, moral support and trust during the most difficult times. Having Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Betül Çelik, as thesis adviser, has been a great pleasure and an invaluable experience for me.

Secondly, I would like to thank my thesis committee members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nimet Beriker and Assist. Prof. Dr. Nedim Nomer, for their valuable ideas, comments, and suggestions that contributed in the improvement of this thesis.

Also, I am thankful to my professor Dr. Teri Murphy which has contributed a lot in my personal and professional growth throughout these two years of graduate studies.

I want to thank some special people that have always stood by me and have contributed to this research through their moral support. I am very thankful to my family, my parents, Astrit and Valentina, and my brother Avni for their moral and financial support during my studies. Their unconditional love, support and encouragement have been real sources of strength and motivation for me.

Special thanks to Egin, for his love, patience, encouragement, untried support and for staying by me throughout the entire thesis research and writing process.

Last, but not least, I want to thank all the people that participated in this research by sharing their views, opinions and ideas.

The support, love and encouragement of all the above mentioned people are the real sources of the success of this thesis.

I owe my deepest gratitude to all of you...

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CHAPTER I | INTRODUCTION

As John F. Kennedy said 'the future prospects of any nation depend on the current prospects of its youth'¹, so engaging youth's energy, idealism and fresh perspectives means a success to leave a better world to future generations. At the same time it means employing new ways of solving the old problems, since as stated by Einstein 'problems cannot be solved with the same thinking that created them.'²

Historically youth have played an important role in both conflict generation and resolution. They have contributed to conflict and peace; they have been important actors in interstate to intrastate to interpersonal conflicts, by participating in revolutions, regime overthrows, revolts, and other forms of protests. On the other hand, they have promoted peace by becoming peace activists, peace makers, peace builders, etc. Youth have the power and energy to change the world, so their inclusion in world politics, their ideas, understanding, perceptions, knowledge, beliefs, opinions, perspectives, approaches and attitudes toward peace and conflict are very important. They have the potential to create trouble or bring peace, which highlights the importance of knowing their needs, goals, and hope which drive them either toward peace or conflict.

The literature shows a gap in the research and knowledge on the role of youths in conflict and peace, because scholars in the field have not paid enough attention to this important population. The importance of youths' role in conflict and peace, and the

¹ Kennedy, J. F. (1963). 62-Special Message to the Congress on the Nation's Youth. Retrieved November, 2012 from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9561>

²Albert Einstein Quotes. Retrieved November 20, 2012 from <http://www.alberteinstein.com/quotes/einsteinquotes.html>

existing gap especially in the literature on the role of youths outside the conflict environment, motivated me to explore their understanding of peace and conflict.

Today more intrastate rather than interstate conflicts can be witnessed and ethnic conflicts are considered as the most spread type of conflict. In the Balkans ethnic identity has been a source of conflict in almost every conflict case, since in this region a lot of people with the same ethnic identity live in different countries either as majority or minority groups. An example of this phenomenon can be ethnic Albanians living in Albania that is the kin state, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia have been experiencing conflicts for a long time.

Youths are a group of society present in all spheres of life that can shape a state's policies and approaches. Their role becomes even more important in countries like Albania, which is a country with one of the highest rate of youth population among the European countries. The fact that Albania is a kin state for ethnic Albanians experiencing conflict, and has a high rate of youth population motivated me to explore the understanding of youth, in kin state Albania, on the conflicts of their kin groups in Kosovo and in Macedonia.

Moreover, an increase in ethnic and nationalist identity salience inside Albania especially after the Kosovo independence; rising violent clashes in Macedonia; emergence of nationalist parties like Red-Black Alliance Party; and the 100th year of independence celebration in Albania, increased my interest in this topic. Encouraged by the fact that ethnic identity is gaining importance in kin state Albania, I believe that it would be beneficial to explore kin state's youth approaches towards kin groups' conflicts in this context.

For the purpose of this research, the understanding of youths that are members of political parties youth forums are explored, since they might have more influence on kin state's policies and approaches towards their kin groups. The focus is on youth political forums as institutionalized mediums for youth's party membership.

In the literature it is possible to come across research on the role of youth as peacemakers or troublemakers, however the understanding of kin state's youth on kin

groups' conflicts is still unexplored. The significance and strength of this study lies in this point.

This thesis takes youths which are members of different political parties' youth forums as a subject of research aiming to explore their understanding that may shape their tendencies to either peace or conflict; to becoming peacemakers or troublemakers. This study aims to answer the research question: "How do kin state's youth understand their kin groups' conflicts?" focusing on the understanding of youth in Albania on ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia.

This research attempts to answer the research question by looking at youths engaged in political parties' youth forums in Albania. In this regard three interviewees were conducted with youth from each youth forum of the three largest political parties including the Socialist Party, the Democratic Party and the Socialist Movement for Integration Party. Also, two interviews with youths from the forum of a nationalist party, Red-Black Alliance Party, were conducted. Moreover a control group comprising of three youths without party membership were also included in the research. All the interviews took place in Tirana city, in Albania. The text analysis method was employed to analyze the data.

The thesis starts with a literature review on kin state - kin group relations; youth and their role in kin state - kin groups' conflicts; youths' understanding of conflict; youth as troublemakers or peacemakers; and youth's party membership, political ideology and conflict understanding. In the third chapter I provide information on ethnic Albanians conflicts' in Kosovo and in Macedonia, the role of Albania as a kin state in kin groups' conflict, the role of youth within kin state Albania, and some information on youths' parties of membership. The methods used for gathering and analyzing the data are introduced in the fourth chapter, and the findings on the collected data are included in the fifth chapter. In the final chapter of the thesis, the discussion on the findings of the research is followed by the conclusion, implications and limitations of the research and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II | LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on kin-state, youth, youth in the kin-state, youths' understanding of peace and conflict, and youth as troublemakers or peacemakers. The first section of this chapter focuses on the existing literature on kin-state, by looking at kin state-kin group relationship and kin-state's role in ethnic conflicts. The second section presents the literature on youth and youth's role in kin state-kin group relations. In this section the existing discourse on youth definition and the importance of youth as a subject of research is presented, followed by youth's opinions on peace and conflict and an overview of the literature on the youth as an actor within the kin-state. The other section examines the literature on the role of youth as troublemakers or peacemakers. The last section deals with youths' party membership, ideology and conflict understanding, focusing on the literature on party membership, as a form of youth participation, and the relationship between ideology and conflict understanding. Finally the understanding of Albanian youth in their kin state, specifically Kosovo Albanians' conflict with Serbia and Macedonian Albanians' conflict in Macedonia are highlighted.

2.1. Kin State

2.1.1. Kin state-Kin group Relationship

Ethnic conflict has been attracting the scholarly attention, increasingly so since the end of the Cold War. The literature on the factors influencing ethnic conflicts has focused mostly on internal factors. However, among external factors scholars also listed the influence of international actors as well (Gurr, 2000; Gurr and Marshall 2003; Posen, 1993; Coakley, 2009; Yilmaz, 2010). Recent studies (Brubaker, 1995:1996; Austvoll, 2006; Koinova, 2008; Saideman, 2001; 2002; Sabanadze, 2006; Huibregtse, 2011 etc), based on kinship literature, have included kin ethnic groups and kin-state as

important external factors in ethnic conflicts. Even though kinship is defined by important scholars as a crucial external factor, it's an understudied topic in conflict resolution. According to Sabanadze (2006: 244), kinship implies a close ethno-national, political, social, cultural, linguistic and historical relationship among kin groups.

The role of kinship in ethnic conflict is determined by the relationship that kin groups have among each other and with the kin state. Murphy defines *kin groups* as “social groups whose members define their relationship (or their eligibility for membership) by kinship or common descent” (2001: 12). Also, as the main actor in kinship structure, kin state is one of the most important external factors affecting the kin-minority vs. host states’ conflicts (Austvoll, 2005; Saideman, 2001, 2002). Sabanadze (2006) defines *kin-state* as a “state in which ethnic kin composes a titular majority” (Sabanadze, 2006: 244). Brubaker’s definition for kin state is ‘external national homeland’. According to Brubaker (1995), homeland or kin state is a political category not given, but constructed. A state becomes a kin state for its kin groups when “political or cultural elites assert that co-ethnics abroad belong to the nation and that their interests must be monitored and promoted by the state; and when the state actually does take action in the name of monitoring, promoting, or protecting the interests of its co-ethnics abroad” (Brubaker, 1995: 110).

According to Huibregtse (2011), recent studies view kinship as an important factor leading to ethnic group mobilization, emergence and internationalization of ethnic conflicts. But on the other hand, according to Coakley (2009: 9), incentives of the kin-state to settle the conflict can lead to peaceful and legal self-determinations, too. Kin state can contribute to either peace or conflict, depending on the role it plays concerning its kin minorities’ conflicts.

2.1.2. Kin state’s Role in an Ethnic Conflict

The importance of the kin-state in its kin minorities’ conflicts is highlighted in Brubaker’s concept of a “triadic nexus which focuses on roles of the home state, the ethnic minority, and minority’s kin state” (Gherghina & Jigla, 2011: 56). A better understanding of the dynamics going on between the home state, kin minority and kin-state requires more research on the role of the kin-state in kin minorities’ conflicts.

Brubaker (1996: 58) states that kin-state, or on his own terms 'homeland' politics, range from immigration and citizenship privileges, to attempts to influence other states' policies towards its co-ethnics, to irredentist claims on the territory of other states. Similarly, Huibregtse states that "A state may intervene to detach territory populated by its kin from another state, to help them become independent or to end their suffering and improve their status within the other state." (Huibregtse, 2011: 46).

Most studies support the claim that shared ethnicity increases the likelihood of interstate conflict, especially when talking about an at-risk ethnic minority (Henderson, 1997). According to Austvoll (2006) kinship is important when predicting intervention and intervention is more likely when the government of the intervener has kin within the state it intervenes in. As Saideman (2001, 2002) mentions, if one group has ethnic ties with an outside actor, then it is expected and more likely that the external actor will support that group. Jenne adds that "once a minority receives some signals that its lobby state might be supportive, it radicalizes to obtain concessions from its host state even if the majority guarantees protection to the minority" (Jenne, 2004: 729–756 as cited in Koinova, 2008: 376). An important example can be the role of Turkey in Cyprus conflict.

There are various support mechanisms that the kin state can provide to its kin minority elsewhere. Except official declarations of support, high funding is the most effective help kin minorities take. Scholars like Huibregtse (2011: 47) mention that if only affective ties are taken into consideration by the kin state, it will be ready to intervene at any cost. On the other side, Koinova argues that "kin-states undergoing transition from totalitarian rule are much more likely to facilitate the rise of ethno national conflict in host-states than kin-states experiencing no transition, despite the salience of the minority demands in the host-state" (2008: 373).

Some other scholars focus on kin-state capabilities while discussing about its role. As Huibregtse claims "power calculations are important and kin states must consider if they are powerful enough to ensure victory, and whether the kin minority is large enough to be 'worth' fighting for" (2011: 47). As Ganguli argues "a kin-state may pursue a strategy of 'inaction' towards its kin ethnic because of its own lack of capabilities, funds and cost-benefit analyses" (Ganguli, 1998: 11–31 as mentioned in

Koinova, 2008: 374). On the other hand, Carment and James (2000) argue that an autonomous state with strong institutions is more likely to act. “In the absence of such institutionalization, domestic elites’ experiences are highly likely to formulate an aggressive foreign policy using international opportunities to promote their own domestic agendas” (Carment & James, 2000: 173–177). Both accounts put their finger on the state’s strength as a variable important for ethnic conflicts abroad. Moreover the approaches of the kin state towards its kin groups’ conflicts need attention since they may show the real goals behind kin state’s policies and actions.

2.1.3. Kin state’s Approaches towards Kin groups’ Conflict

Kinship literature focuses on three main approaches of the kin-state toward its kin minorities, including the ‘nationalist approach’, the ‘geopolitical approach’ and the ‘normative approach’. Nationalist approach is followed by “those states that incorporate support of kin-minorities abroad into their national and nation-building agendas by pursuing policies that are influenced as much by issues of kin-minorities as by internal political considerations” (Sabanadze, 2006: 248). The “states that use kin-minorities in another state as a means of influencing or pressuring that state and boosting its own geopolitical interests pursue geopolitical approach” (Sabanadze, 2006: 249). The least problematic approach is the normative approach according to which “states pursue policies aimed at promoting the rights of their kin minorities in home-states either in co-operation with respective governments or via international institutions” (Sabanadze, 2006: 250). Their aim is to improve the rights of minorities in general as well as those of a specific kin-minority and to enhance overall standards of minority protection. “States rarely act with purely normative intentions and more often than not use them to justify their nationalist or geopolitical goals.” (Sabanadze, 2006: 250).

The main goal of kin-states pursuing normative approach is protection and improvement of kin minorities’ rights and it acts in cooperation and coordination with the host state and international institutions, which are the two main actors responsible for guaranteeing minority rights. This cooperation of the kin-state with host state and international institutions shows that kin state pursuing normative approach is more in favor of peaceful resolution of the problems. On the other hand, kin states pursuing a nationalist approach give priority to the issues related to their kin groups, and they

support only the types of resolution that would benefit their kin groups. Some important actors have the chance to influence the approach that state will pursue toward its kin minorities and one of those actors is youth.

2.2. Youth and Their Role in Kin State-Kin Group Relations

Youth are the agents of change and hope, the leaders of the future; they have the sources and potentials to pursue constructive approaches to conflicts as well as destructive ones. They can be manipulated by political elites and groups, or they can be active free participants contributing to decision making apparatus of the state. On one hand, youth can participate in politics to bring positive change and new perspectives; and on the other hand, manipulated by the existing political culture, they can bring negative changes. Crucial to mention is the hope that through their engagement in politics youths can shift the kin states' approach toward kin minorities from a geopolitical and nationalist one toward a more normative and constructive one. On the other side stays the risk of youths' mobilization by nationalist feelings and interests. The role that youth of the present play can be decisive in shaping the present and future policies of the kin-state. Below, first, the discourse on youth definition will be presented, followed by the importance of youth as a subject of research, and finally I will look at youths' understanding of peace and conflict and youth as an actor within the kin state.

2.2.1. Definition of Youth

Youth are the citizens of the present, they are supposed to be the carriers of the past to the future; they can be carriers of hope for change and prosperity, but at the same time they can be carriers of troubles and violence. Literature uses "youth" and "young people" interchangeably, since etymologically based on old English, "youth" means "related to young". Youth is considered as the time of life when someone is young; it's the transition period from childhood to maturity; and it includes the early period of existence, growth, or development.³

³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Retrieved November 25, 2012 from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/youth>

It has been increasingly acknowledged that youth is a social construct and its meaning changes according to time, space and context. Flanagan and Syvertsen states that youth “are people making transitions from the dependencies of childhood to assume the responsibilities of adulthood, and the period of youth begins in biology and ends in culture.” (2006: 11).

According to the biological definitions, youth is associated with “adolescence,” the period when sexual development starts. The first psychologist who defined youth as a social construct is G. Stanley Hall (Griffin, 1997). According to Hall, adolescence is the period after childhood and before adulthood; however, adolescence is not necessarily the same with youth. Psychologist Kenneth Keniston who had a psychological definition of youth “differentiated between ‘youth’ and ‘adolescence’ by introducing ‘a separate “just emerging” stage of life called “youth,”” and he proposed to reserve it to the ages between 18 and 30.” (Adamski, 1988: 193). Scholars that define youth like Keniston, adolescence starts at 10 or 11 and ends at 18 or 19 when youth start. They make this differentiation by considering as adolescence the phase when biological transition happens, with the initiation of puberty. Also for these scholars the term ‘youth’ is mostly based on social change rather than biological one, because today age 18-19 marks the start of a transition phase to adulthood (Arnett, 200, 476).

Youth, also, has a cultural meaning, but according to scholars its meaning changes from one culture or society to the other. Historically, youth is considered as a product of modernization, urbanization and industrial societies (Flanagan & Syvertsen, 2006). Before the industrial revolution there was no transition period between childhood and maturity; youth term started to emerge after the industrial revolution, as a phase to get prepared for working life.

The age limit for youth changes from one organization and country to the other. According to the UN, the age limit for youth is 15 to 24 (UNDP, 2008) and Council of Europe (CoE) defines youth as the people of age ranging between 15 to 30.⁴ European Union (EU) categorizes the people aged between 15 and 28 (in some cases 13-30) as

⁴ Council of Europe, Structures. Retrieved August, 20, 2012 from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/Structures_en.asp

youth.⁵ The World Health Organization (WHO) presents the lowest age limit for youth based on a biological definition. According to World Health Organization, youth is “the period of life being with the appearance of secondary sex characteristics and terminating with the cessation of somatic growth. The years usually referred to as adolescence lie between 13 and 18 years of age.”⁶

The futurist orientation and the idea of youth incompetency raise some discourses on the definition of youth. The futurist approach focuses on youths as the adults of the future and their present role is ignored; so they should wait to become adults in order to be included in social and citizenship systems (Uprichard, 2008; Smith et al., 2005). Youth are considered as a transition phase and the “the onus of importance [is placed] on that which the child will be, rather than that which the child is” (Uprichard 2008, 304). Futurist lenses ignore youth’s present role as individual with their own rights and conceptualize them as future adults (Uprichard 2008). Social and political power sharing institutions and systems are considered as spaces for adult participation and they exclude youth from their structures, based on the idea that youths are not capable to be included in these structures. (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005; Neyzi, 2001). Considering youths as incompetent ignores their capacities, sources and contribution to the social, political and economic systems. It is important to look at youth as a subject of research in order to understand their importance for conflict and peace potential in societies.

2.2.2. Youth as a Subject of Research

In the last decades with the emergence of globalization, neo-liberalism, technological developments and rise of identity politics youths started to gain attention as active actors in social, political and economic life. Different disciplines like sociology, anthropology and psychology shifted their attention to the role of youth by emphasizing the importance of listening the perceptions, perspectives, experiences, feelings and thoughts of youth while developing policies that concern youth or their

⁵ European Commission, Youth in Action Program. Retrieved August 16, 2012 from http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74_en.htm

⁶ World Health Organization, Young People. Retrieved August 20, 2012 from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs345/en/index.html>

society, and also emphasizing the importance of empowering youth inclusion in social, political and economic sectors.

All different disciplines bring new knowledge on youth starting from biological to behavioral to societal issues, and from these disciplines emerges the theoretical framework on youth. Anthropology focuses mainly on youth culture which is defined as different from adult culture (Neyzi, 2005). Research in this topic looks for example at the music preferences, dressing style and living styles of youths (Fornas, 1995; Bennet & Kahn-Harris). Psychologists look at the cognitive and behavioral processes of youth. For example developmental psychologists influenced by S. Hall focus on young people's cognitive and behavioral processes and the search for self-identity (Loevinger, 1997). Political scientists consider youth as a political actor through their participation in political and civil spheres (Sherrod, 2006). The value that political scientists and sociologists give to youth as important social actors is best mentioned by Flanagan and Syvertsen who state that "focusing on the issues that matter to younger generations, the beliefs and world views they hold, and their relationships with older generations provide a glimpse of the future political landscape of a society" (2006: 14).

Conflict resolution, which is an interdisciplinary field, combines all the perspectives of above mentioned disciplines concerning youth by focusing on the needs, roles, perspectives, understanding and perceptions of youth about peace and conflict (McEvoy- Levy, 2006).

As McEvoy- Levy (2006) claims youth can work on activities to bring positive change toward peace by becoming peace activists, or they can become violence catalysts depending on the context, their goals, aims and perceptions. According to Sherrod (2006) "activism refers to action for social change" and it is aimed for constructive social change (Sherrod, 2006: 1). One type of activism that can make youth important actors in peace or conflict is their political activism; political activism is one type of youth participation called 'political or institutional participation'⁷ (Chisholm and Kovacheva, 2002). Whether youth will contribute to peace or conflict depends on the direction of their political activism and the tools they use for participation that are

⁷ For the purpose of this study political and institutional participation is used interchangeably.

mainly shaped by their aims, goals and understanding of conflict and peace. Before looking at the literature on youth's participation it is important to look at the theoretical framework on the role that youths' understanding of different events and issues may shape their behaviors, participation and activism.

2.2.3. Youth's Understanding of Peace and Conflict

According to the literature, psychological, socio-cultural, political and situational factors shape youths' understanding of peace and conflict. Psychological factors firstly, are related to the idea that perceptions or opinions of youth change with age; as they get older their opinions and understanding can change. Socio-cultural factors include "the social knowledge and cultural beliefs that are created within particular communities based on their common history and experience and are expressed and transmitted to new generations through collective memory, traditions and symbols. Since they are directly related to the community, by giving meaning to the past and helping to understand the present, they are very important in shaping the understanding and attitudes on peace and conflict." (Raviv et al., 1999: 184; Covell, 1999: 122). Political awareness, which shapes youths' opinions, develops within these social and cultural contexts, so considering the social and cultural context where youths are socialized and have gained their knowledge is crucial in understanding their opinions. As McEvoy-Levy (2006b) mentions, situational factors, including youth's experiences, their goals and interests, their direct or indirect involvement in the conflict, and their identity politics are very important in shaping their perceptions, understanding, beliefs and attitudes toward peace and conflict. .

2.2.4. Youth in the Kin-state

Looking at the ethnic conflicts today, nationalist and geopolitical approaches are the main approaches of the kin-states toward their kin minorities' conflicts. Factors like kin states' power, capabilities, domestic public support, elites, and decision making actors shape kin-state's policies toward its kin minorities experiencing conflict (Gurr, 2000; Huibregtse, 2011; Ganguli 1998: 11–31 as mentioned in Koinova, 2008; Carment & James, 2000).

Youth are an important group of the society, present in all the areas that shape kin state's policies and actions. The role of youth becomes even more important in countries where youth constitute a high rate of population. Youth's social, economical and political participation are crucial, however, being politically active is very important in shaping the national and international policies. For the purpose of this study the focus is mainly on politically active youth, which are the members of political parties' youth forums. Youth contribute to the political decision making processes concerning the domestic issues, but also may affect the foreign policies like the policies that kin state will pursue toward its kin minorities in the host states by contributing either to peace or violence. In order to understand whether they may have a positive or negative influence on kin state's approach in their conflict with host states, it is important to look at their own peace and conflict understanding. In this regard the potentials of youth for being trouble makers or peace makers are presented below.

2.3. Youth as Troublemakers or Peacemaker

The literature on the role of youth in conflict focuses on the two main roles that they can play: troublemakers or peace makers (McEvoy-Levy, 2006). Youths as trouble makers are presented as agents of conflict and negative change, and they should be contained for the sake of peace. On the other hand the discourse on youth as peace makers considers youth as agents of peace during and after the conflict.

The literature on youth as trouble makers does not provide "comprehensive understanding on identity, roles, attitudes and behavior; they focus mainly on rights-based and economic-based approaches to youth development and overlook youth's positive participation during peace processes" (Pratley, 2011: 45). Youth are seen as negative actors because "when young people are uprooted, jobless, and intolerant, alienated, and have few opportunities for positive engagement, they represent a ready pool of recruits for groups seeking to mobilize violence."⁸ Pratley (2011: 30) emphasizes three sub types of youth as trouble makers: "youth-as-perpetrators during conflict, triggers-of-conflict, and spoilers-to-peace." According to Pratley (2011), the

⁸ USAID and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention, Washington, DC, United States Agency for International Development, 2005, p.3.

studies on ‘youth as perpetrators’, deal with the role of youth during the armed conflict. An example to this can be child soldiers in Uganda and Sierra Leone engaged in atrocities not restrained by social norms or morality. Pratley (2011) states that studies on ‘youth as triggers of conflict’ focus on youth as social and economic de-stabilizers within their communities, having the potential to cause or continue conflict. ‘Youth as spoilers to peace’ category includes youth during the conflict and these youth are considered as important but weak actors that could become a barrier to peace accords implementation if they had the interest and material capability to do so (Pratley, 2011).

Shiobán McEvoy-Levy (2006) claims that the terminology used for youth concerning their role in conflict needs more elaboration, since there is a “tendency to equate children with victimization and youth (usually defined as teens or adolescents) with perpetration” (McEvoy-Levy, 2006: 4). Differentiating among youth and children is not always easy since someone that may be a rioter when is youth may have been a child of poverty and war displacement in the past, so they are related to each other. The terminology can be manipulated depending on the context and interests of those defining youth and their role.

If young people feel that they are not influential in political processes, they can be easily manipulated by political elites or groups advocating violence. Also if youths feel alienated by being not politically represented or participating, than the possibility for them to resort to violence and insurgency increases. According to a research conducted among disenfranchised youth in Sierra Leone, those who did not support any political party were more likely to join violent movements and insurgent groups (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). The fact that young people need to feel a sense of belonging is very crucial; and they can find that sense of belonging from negative sources like violent groups or ideas, if they are excluded from their communities and societies. In such a case, firstly, if a conflict exists youth respond to that conflict by participating in different violent groups; and in the absence of such an active conflict they become a potential recruitment pool for violent activities in the future and they can join different groups like guerrilla activities, gangs etc (McEvoy Levy 2001).

According to the literature another factor that can direct youths to trouble making is the absence of positive role models, which increases the risk for youths’

“recruitment and self-recruitment into violent extremist groups” (Mercy Corps, 2010: 10). Excluded youths can find meaning and move toward the direction of extremist or/and violent groups led by charismatic and inspirational leaders, who recruit and get the support of youth by legitimizing violence to reach the goals. Propaganda and a history of victimization instill a sense of humiliation among youth and they start to believe that revenge is the solution and turn to people that can help them with violent sources (Mercy Corps, 2010: 11).

Factors like exclusion from society, lack of hope, structural inequalities, manipulation, etc. all cause a sense of loss and lack of belonging which is a strong driver for youth violent participation. Pratley (2011) emphasizes that political ideology and identity politics can provide sources for mobilizing youth toward violence.

On the other side many scholars defend the positive contribution of youth participation. The youth peace building literature is not extensive, but recently the academic studies have emerged on youths’ roles as peaceful agents of positive change. Siobhàn McEvoy- Levy, Marc Sommers and Stephanie Schwartz have criticized the absence of a holistic understanding of youths’ role (Pratley, 2011: 45). According to McEvoy-Levy (2001a) youth can be positive and negative agents during peace building, but the absence of holistic studies on youths’ role is problematic since it ignores the potentials, capabilities and contributions of youth in peace and conflict. Pratley (2011) adds that “the peace builder construction allows for the dual identities of youth as potential troublemakers and peacemakers and places a much greater emphasis on the dynamic understanding of youth identity in conflict” (Pratley, 2011: 48)

As Drummond- Mundal & Cave (2007) state “conflict transformation and peace-building can be seen as overlapping and complementary activities that theoretically, if not always practically, embrace the participation of young people” (Drummond-Mundal & Cave, 2007: 69). In this regard organizations led by youth, either NGOs or Youth wings, can be considered as important spaces that can lead to positive change by empowering youth and giving space to them for positive action and change. The idea that youth organizations inspire youths’ opinions, behaviors and attitudes is widely acknowledged (Drummond-Mundal & Cave, 2007). Significantly, youth organization and youth participation encourage collective action (Kim and Sherman, 2006: 2).

According to Pratley, “through effective programming youth identities⁹ can be transformed.” (2011:48). She claims that “peace building programs are effective in shaping youth’s roles during post-conflict periods, only if they successfully altered the decision-making structures that lead youth to destabilizing behavior” (Pratley, 2011: 48). As Kurtenbach adds, “youth related peace-building needs in and after violent conflict are closely related to the capacities and the political will of the state” (2008:7). In most conflict the state is either unable or unwilling to perform the functions that are crucial for youth personal development, and civil society organizations’ work on complementing these basic functions of the state in order to prevent youths from engaging in violence and war (Kurtenbach, 2008). Kurtenbach (2008) mentions these important basic functions include: physical, mental and psychological protection of youth, advocacy for youth related issues, socialization and social cohesion of youth in the society, reconstruction of the social infrastructure (education, health), rehabilitation (social and psychological), reconciliation of youth with the society, integration of youth within the existing structures, etc .

It is crucial to mention that “youth-as-peace builders provide extra human resources, innovative ideas and youthful idealism when rebuilding their communities” (Pratley, 2011: 49). Ignoring youth’s potential can cause prolonged instability, especially concerning peace processes the endurance of peace depends on “whether the next generations accept or reject the peace, how they are socialized during the peace process and their perceptions of what that peace has achieved.” (McEvoy-Levy (2001a): 5-6). Sustainable peace depends highly on understanding the needs, issues and interests of youth; since this understanding will contribute to identity construction of youth which shapes their policy decisions.

Young people can be peace builders by spreading the values of peace and democracy with their activism in local, national or international youth organizations. In this regard some important project and initiatives like Shministim, OTPOR, Peace Links Sierra Leone, United Network of Young Peace-builders, Glencree Summer Schools and APPYA (All Political Parties Youth Association) can be mentioned. Shministim was

⁹ Youth identities here refer to youth identities as troublemakers or peacemakers.

created by 300 Israeli high school students, which were in favor of peace and chose to express themselves non-violently and link up with other international networks to resist compulsory conscription in Israel and to oppose occupation by claiming that it was against their basic values (Felice and Wisler, 2007: 15-16). OTPOR, which functioned through a shared leadership, was founded against the regime of Milosevic by youths in Serbia (Felice and Wisler, 2007). It offered youth a place to gather and express their creative ideas, get empowered, and make youths to feel “they owned the activities and were building a better future, with a sense of transcendence” (Felice and Wisler, 2007:17). Peacelinks is a youth-led non-governmental organization founded in Sierra Leone in 1990 with the aim to “empower marginalized young people to work for positive change in their communities” (Felice and Wisler, 2007: 19). The United Network of Young Peace-builders (UNOY Peace-builders) is a “global network of young people and youth organizations active in the field of peace building and conflict transformation” (Felice and Wisler, 2007: 20). Its main activities include: networking, sharing of information and publications, peer-to-peer support etc (Felice and Wisler, 2007).

Glencree Summer Schools and APPYA (All Political Parties Youth Association) are peace-related activities that include youths which are members of political parties’ youth forums. Glencree Summer Schools bring together members of youth wings from political parties in Ireland to discuss ‘the future prospects and requirements for the continuation of a successful peace process on these islands.’¹⁰ Also, APPYA (All Political Parties Youth Association) in Sierra Leone develops and organizes activities in cooperation with different organizations aiming to promote political tolerance and non-violent participation.¹¹

As mentioned by Felice and Wisler (2007: 20), this network shows the capacity of youth to organize in a trans-national network, to improve their peace building skills,

¹⁰The next generation of Political Leaders Debate and Peace Processes, Press Release retrieved August 20, 2012 from http://www.glencree.ie/site/documents/press_release_ss_100824.pdf

¹¹Kenya- Sierra Leone Party Youth: Peer to Peer Exchange Visit. Press Statement Retrieved August 20, 2012 from <http://www.ndi.org/files/Kenya-Sierra%20Leone%20party%20youth%20Press%20statement%20final.pdf>

and to exchange and advocate for the inclusion of youth in peace processes. In all examples it can be noticed that “they are all youth-led initiatives developing creative responses to violence which take into special consideration the needs and preferences of youth” (Felice and Wisler, 2007: 21). Mobilization power, great outreach capacity to youth, and peer-to-peer activities are among the biggest strength of all these initiatives or projects (Felice and Wisler, 2007).

This study adopts the theoretical conceptualization of youths as political party’s youth forums members in the belief that such conceptualization is useful for the study of kin state’s politically active youths’ understanding of kin group - host state conflicts. Youths have the right to be active political actors and have the direct or indirect role in conflict environments. Also as future adults youth are important potential actors to contribute to peace establishment. After presenting the potentials of youth as troublemakers or peacemakers, is important to look at the literature on youth’s party membership as a form of participation that helps youth to express their worldviews and the relationship among ideologies, as political worldviews, and conflict understanding.

2.4. Party Membership, Ideology and Conflict Understanding

2.4.1. Youth Participation and Party Membership

According to Kim and Sherman (2006: 1) the dominant view in the literature on youth emphasizes that “youth are problems to be fixed, not the sources of solutions to social ills”. On the other hand in the 1980s, this view started to be challenged by positive youth development movements; and societies moved “from seeing youth as problems to be fixed [...] to viewing them as assets... and to embracing young people as full partners in community life.” (Kim and Sherman, 2006: 2). According to Laurezen (2008: 280) the emergence of the idea that “youth is a resource for a society, not a problem” brought to the focus the social, political and economic engagement of youth. Youth participation became priority for some international organizations such as the CoE and UN and they are encouraging their member states to support and promote youth participation, mainly because of the importance that participation has to social pluralism and since it is considered as “the school for democracy, the essence of

democracy and the prerequisite to developing a sense of belonging and citizenship” (Laurezen, 2008: 222).

Glinkski (1998) considers youth as the most dynamic medium for social change, since their role has been very important in social movements that are the force behind these changes. When examining the movements led by youth since the nineteenth century, it can be easily observed that they played a crucial role; “on one hand, it was “constructed” by different ideologies in the name of modernity and progress; on the other hand, youth itself was at the forefront of constructing new societies” (Lüküslü, 2005:31).

The literature shows two opposite images of youth, one being constructive and the other being destructive. Although ‘youth participation’ is very often regarded as a positive contribution to democracy, as Chisholm & Kovacheva (2002) mention some of its forms are anti-democratic and anti-social like in the case of neo-fascist movements, or in the case of violent movements against ethnic or cultural minorities. However, many scholars emphasize the role of youths as agents of positive change, and participation is one way of making change (Adamski, 1988; MacKinnon, Pitre, Watling, 2007; Sherrod, 2006).

Four areas of youth participation are described by UN General Assembly. Those areas include: ‘*economic participation*’, which includes economic development, employment, work and reducing poverty; ‘*social participation*’ stands for involvement in local community and life in general; ‘*cultural participation*’ includes various forms of arts and expression; and ‘*political participation*’ is related to exercising power and influencing decision-making processes (CoE, 2008).

Young people can be active in decision making in several ways like ‘being active in voluntary work (NGOs, clubs) or in youth councils, parliaments, political parties; voting; campaigning activities; demonstrations and so forth’ (CoE, 2008). All spheres of social life from informal association like family to formal politics are in the scope of youth participation (Chisholm and Kovacheva, 2002). Chisholm and Kovacheva (2002) distinguish three main forms of participation: ‘institutional politics’ (elections, campaigns and membership to political parties, trade unions, and interest

groups), 'protest politics' (social movements, demonstrations) and 'civic engagement' (associative life, community participation, voluntary work. The above mentioned forms of participation are non-violent forms of participation.

Party membership, which is categorized by Chisholm and Kovacheva (2002) under participation in institutional politics, is one form of non violent participation. Heidar (2006) adds that "membership is an expression of belonging or identity" (Heidar, 2006: 302). According to Boozer and Forte (2007), party membership may influence or shape the opinions of individuals on different political issues based on their views and understanding of these issues.

The literature suggests that people join political parties for identity expression, gaining influence, and ideological, social and material reasons. According to some scholars, expression of political ideology and contribution to the achievement of "party's collective policies or ideological goals" are important motives behind party membership (Young and Cross, 2002: 549; Scarrow, 2005). Also, the literature suggests that people join political parties because they are attracted and motivated by the fact that parties offer more possibilities and influence their members (Hofmeister and Grabow, 2011; Heidar, 2006). Other important reasons that may lead people to join political parties include gaining social and material or economic benefits (Heidar, 2006; Scarrow, 2005; Young and Cross, 2002). People's interest in politics, solidarity and socialization can be mentioned among other reasons for party membership (Scarrow, 2005; Heidar, 2006; Young and Cross, 2002).

Chisholm and Kovacheva (2002) mention youth forums as a formal type where youth can exercise their activity as members of the party, youth leagues, based on their hierarchical positions in the party, have a high chance to promote and protect democratic governance, by being in frontline roles to support and promote democratic goals, issues and interests within their parties and countries. With the high number of youths participating in these leagues "they are able to exact pressure on the mother party leadership to respond to social needs of the state" (Kanyadudi, 2010, 15). The role of youth has been very important in developing the programs and policies of the political parties and shaping the national agenda, but still their contribution is not precisely celebrated. According to Kanyadudi (2010:15), one of the reasons leading to the non-

celebration of youth's contribution is the intent of older cadres or elites, eager to power, to leave youth and their new worldviews to the periphery. Another reason is "the inability of the youth themselves to take visible strategic positions and highlight their own contributions" (Kanyadudi, 2010: 15). However, it still is important to mention that in some cases "parties facilitate the visibility and encourage active participation and representation of the youth leagues in the decision making processes" (Kanyadudi, 2010: 15).

According to the commitment theory of Paul Sabatier (1992), strong ideological sympathy toward one party may foster people to join political parties (Heidar, 2006). "Political ideology, to a greater extent, concerns the beliefs, traditions and philosophies of political parties." (Wayo-Seini, 2006: 2; Gyampo, 2012: 138). Moreover, political ideology plays an important role in shaping the political future and behavior of youth members of political parties (Zukinet al. 2006; Gyampo, 2012).

The role of kin state's youth toward their kin groups' conflicts can be either constructive or destructive, based on their understanding of these conflicts. The literature shows that party membership gives to the members the possibility to express their worldviews, but whether this expression will be violent or non violent in conflict related issues depends on the motivations behind youths' membership to political parties and their understanding of peace and conflict. Also in the existing literature ideology, which is a political worldview, is presented as an important motivation behind engagement in politics and at the same time as an important element shaping youths' understanding of the events and their behavior (Wayo-Seini, 2006; Gyampo, 2012). In this regard, it is very important to have a look at the literature on the role that ideology may play in youth's understanding of peace and conflict.

2.4.2. Political Ideology and Conflict Understanding

Worldview or "ideology can be seen as an identity-expressive phenomenon" (Calvert, 2001: 16-17). It "provide(s) a perspective through which the world is understood and explained which means that people see the world based on their embedded beliefs, opinions and assumptions" (Heywood, 2003: 2; Eidelson and Eidelson, 2003). According to some scholars ideologies, considered as political beliefs,

can influence the ideas, opinions, understandings, attitudes and behaviors of the people and they can also become motivations for political activity (Heywood, 2003; Fine and Sandstrom, 1993; Jost et al., 2009). Moreover, “ideology has a powerful emotional or affective character; it is a means of expressing hopes and fears, sympathies and hatreds, as well as of articulating beliefs and understandings” (Heywood, 2003: 10).

Pratley (2011) emphasizes the importance of “political grievances founded on political ideology and identity politics which do not in themselves cause conflict, but can provide powerful discourses for mobilizing youth towards perpetuating violence” (Pratley, 2011:38). Ideology establishes a strong mental distinction between us and others and every ideology creates its own other (Camase, 2009). “Otherisation, which can be observed between and within communities, countries and regions”, is a result of people’s subjective perspectives on different issues (Camase, 2009: 21). Once the dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘others’ is established in our minds, “they become they accordingly, and both their territory and mentality are designated as different from ours” (Said, 1979: 54 in Camase, 2009). According to Blommaert and Verschueren (1998), otherisation leads to timeless generalizations and stereotypes that may become obstacles to the relationship between ‘us’ and ‘others’ relationship improvement. Generally the existing literature claims that “ideology is one of the factors that may lead to the difference in attitudes, values and beliefs between ‘us’ and ‘others’” (Camase, 2009; 22-23). These differences based on otherness may promote violence and conflict. Nationalist ideology appears as an example that creates the other based on ethnic or national identity.

Cornel claims that “nationalism is based on real or assumed ethnic ties” (Cornell, 1998: 37). However, Kellas (1998) states that nationalism has more ideological and political dimensions, since it is based on people’s aspirations for a self-governed political entity (Sotiropoulou, 2004). Ethno-nationalism appears when ethnicity becomes nationalist and this may threaten the existence of the state and can provoke conflict (Sotiropoulou, 2004). The distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and as a result discriminative or exclusive treatment can be seen in nationalism (Todosiyevic, 2004). In addition, Todosiyevic (2004) states that nationalism is potentially negatively oriented toward others, depending on a particular context and “the ideology providing legitimate objects of aggression ('enemies' of the nation, our people or country) would

appeal to aggressiveness” (Todosiyevic, 2004: 5). There is a certain consensus about the role of ideology in shaping attitudes towards different political and social issues. According to different scholars, ideology has already been conceptualized as an interpreter of ethnic perceptions and important in ethnic conflicts (Citrin, Sears et al. 2001; Pardos-Prado, 2007: 5). Political ideologies may shape people’s attitudes and approaches, but whether these attitudes and approaches will be positive or negative remains to be seen.

As Pratley claims, “if peace policies are to be effective and owned by future leaders, who will inherit the political and institutional reigns, youth’s needs and perspectives must be taken into account” (2011: 44). The aim of this thesis is to explore politically active youths’ understanding of peace and conflict that may shape their role as peace makers or trouble makers. In this research youths that are the politically active members of political parties’ youth forums. Youth as social actors are not a homogenous category, and this study includes youth with different political ideologies in order to understand whether ideology plays any role in youths’ understanding of peace and conflict.

In this chapter the existing literature on kin state - kin group relationship, kin state’s role in ethnic conflicts, youth’s role in kin state- kin group relations, youth understanding of peace and conflict, youth as troublemakers and peacemakers, and the relationship between party membership, ideology and conflict understanding was presented. The focus of this research is on conflict understanding of youth, living outside conflict environment, which are members of different political parties’ youth forums with different political ideologies. Also, this study concentrates on kin groups’ conflicts, like ethnic Albanians’ conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia that are important conflicts for youth in Albania. I am trying to explore these youths’ conflict understanding that may influence their troublemaking or peacemaking potentials. In the following chapter the case under research will be explained for a better understanding of youth’s approach toward peace and conflict.

CHAPTER III | CASE STUDY

This study looks at youths' understanding of kin groups' conflicts, focusing on ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia. In this chapter, firstly, a brief overview of ethnic Albanians' conflicts is provided. Secondly, the role of Albania as a kin state and the role of youth within the kin state Albania in these conflicts are presented. The chapter is concluded by a short introduction on the political parties where youth under research are members and the ideologies of these parties. The information presented in this chapter will contribute to a better analysis of Albanian youths' understanding of ethnic Albanians' conflicts.

3.1. Ethnic Albanians' Conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia

3.1.1. Kosovo Conflict

In the 8th century, Albanian language speakers, known as Illyrians, started to move from Adriatic to Kosovo (Vickers, 1998). This region was conquered 300 years before Christ by Alexander the Great, and in the 4th century AD it became a part of the Roman province of Dardania (Jansen, 1999). The Slavs, after crossing the Danube, attacked and conquered the Romans in late 6th and in the beginning of the 7th centuries AD (Pattas, 2002). Serbs, which were Slavic people, started to settle in the northern Albania by the middle of the 7th century and by the 11th century AD, Albania and present day Kosovo, was in Slavs' hands (Vickers, 1998). The emergence of Nemanjic dynasty in 1166 which ruled until 1355 marked the most glorious era for the Serbians (Vickers, 1998; Pattas, 2002). On 28th of June 1389 in the Battle of Kosovo, one of the greatest battles in the history, the Ottoman Turks defeated the Serbs (Savich, 2000; Vickers, 1998). Starting by 1448, for next five centuries, the Balkan Peninsula was dominated and ruled by the Ottoman Empire (Pattas, 2002).

The defeat of the Ottomans, in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, endangered the position of the Albanians in the Ottoman Empire leading to the emergence of a nationalist ideology of Greater Albania. Albanian nationalist leaders called 'The Prizren League', on 10th of June 1878 in Prizren, aiming the unification of all Albanians in the Balkans into a Greater Albania (Savich, 2000). The aim of Prizren League was to develop a political and nationalist ideology and design a political program and agenda that would be used to establish an Albanian nation or state, or a Greater Albania (Savich, 2000). "The Greater Albania strategy seeks to annex and gain control of territories inhabited by ethnic Albanians even in areas where Albanians are a minority." (Savich, 2000: 6). According to the Prizren League the territories that were to be included in a Greater Albania were "the Albanian lands, the Serbian province of Kosovo-Metohija, the Southern Serbia region made up of the Medvedja, Presevo, and Bujanovac areas, southern Montenegro, northern Greece made up of the Janina area, Chameria in the Greater Albania lexicon, and, western Macedonia, Illirida in the Greater Albania nomenclature" (Savich, 2000: 6).

The Greater Albania ideology and policy has not changed since it was established in 1878 and it includes five essential requirements: "1) there must be foreign intervention and sponsorship, 2) an ethnic group(s) or population(s) must be targeted as the enemy of ethnic Albanians; 3) ethnic homogeneity and the establishment of ethnically pure regions is essential; 4) to overcome the illegality of the Greater Albania strategy; and finally 5) an armed military conflict or insurgency is needed" (Savich, 2000: 6).

By the beginning of the 20th century AD, the power of the Ottoman Empire was declining and the Balkan wars started. The Balkan wars resulted in the formation of an independent Albanian state and Kosovo passed under Serbia's control to become part of the Yugoslav Federation in 1918. After the World War II, Kosovo became an autonomous region within Serbia, but Serbia's 1989 constitution significantly limited Kosovo's autonomy (Wolff, 1999). By 1991, Albanians accounted for 90% of Kosovo population.

By 1990, with the death of Tito and Milosevic coming to power, the signs of the dissolution of Yugoslav federation appeared, and different republics within the

federation started their struggles for independence (Meir, 1999; Pattas, 2002). Milosevic did not like autonomous regions like Kosovo and started to reduce their autonomy and ensure Serbian control over them (Sklias & Roukanas, 2007). In 1989, deprived of their autonomy, the Albanians established an underground government in Kosovo that was tolerated by Serbs because of its invisibility (Vickers, 1998). In 1990, Milosevic took off the autonomy given to Kosovo and Vojvodina, and constitutionally these provinces passed under Serbia's control (Pattas, 2002). These developments caused Kosovo Albanians to start a non-violent resistance for independence in 1991, but their efforts were defeated by the Serbian government (Pattas, 2002; Wolff, 1999; Sklias & Roukanas, 2007). During the following years of 1991-93, Kosovo Albanians and Serbs were living completely separated and economy was in bad conditions (Jansen, 1999). "The social and economic deterioration forced Albanians to shift from passive resistance and civil disobedience to the use of terrorism in open rebellion against Serbian rule" (Pattas, 2002: 11). In February 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged and started an armed insurgency (Wolff, 1999). Serbian security forces started fighting against civilian ethnic Albanians and KLA, and in February 1998 more than 900 Kosovars were killed. NATO began launching air strikes against Serbia on March 24, 1999 (Pattas, 2002; Gulyas, 2012). On June 3, 1999 Serbia finally agreed to sign the UN-approved peace agreement with NATO, peacekeeping forces were deployed in Kosovo, and the UN assumed administration of the province (Wolff, 1999). On Feb. 17, 2008, the prime minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaçi declared independence from Serbia. Serbia and Russia do not recognize the independence, but 92 countries, including the U.S., have recognized Kosovo as an independent country which did not violate international law according to the International Court of Justice.

In some regions clashes continue and parallel institutions exist like in Mitrovica. Problems exist also in some communes where Kosovo Albanian minority lives in Medvegj, Presheve and Bujanovc. Negotiations for the improvement of relations between Kosovo and Serbia continue and they are mainly led by the EU. Recently, through EU efforts on 19th of April 2013 in Brussels, an agreement was signed among

Kosovo and Serbia which can be considered as an important step for the improvement of their relations but still its future implementation needs to be seen.¹²

As it can be understood the main parties in this conflict are Kosovo Albanians and Serbia. While Kosovo Albanians have been struggling for their independence, the aim of the Serbian state has been to keep Kosovo territories under its control. Third parties like NATO, UN and EU have been involved in this conflict with the aim of ending the violence and finding peaceful conflict resolution strategies.

3.1.2. Ethnic Albanians - Ethnic Macedonians Conflict in Macedonia

The roots of the tensions between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians extend early in the history, with the division of the borders in the Conference of Ambassadors in London in 1912-1913. The Conference of Ambassadors War was a gathering of Great Powers to deal with the problems brought by the First Balkan War which ended the glory of the Ottoman Empire. The main task of this conference was to arbitrate the territorial issues among warring parties and also it proclaimed the independence of Albania.¹³ Albanians claim that, according to the decisions taken in this conference, a lot of Albanian territories were left outside Albania's border, and Albanians in Macedonia were one part of the people living in the territories left outside Albania (Cardillo, 2010). The constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, adopted in 1945, recognized ethnic Albanians as an ethnic minority and free expression of ethnic identity was guaranteed by this constitution. It recognized the rights of ethnic Albanians' in Macedonia but "while ethnic Macedonians composed the most urbanized part of population and dominated the public sector workforce, ethnic Albanians suffered from low levels of education and employment and tended to remain impoverished countryside" (Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004: 2). After the 1991 referendum which showed that two thirds of the population supported the independence, the Republic of Macedonia seceded from the Yugoslav federation even though this

¹² Smolar, P. (2013, April 30). The Guardian, Serbia and Kosovo sign Historic Agreement. Retrieved June 26, 2013 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/30/serbia-kosovo-historic-agreement-brussels>

¹³ Elsie, Robert. Texts and Documents of Albanian History. Retrieved May 12, 2013 from http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1913_2.html

referendum was boycotted by ethnic Albanians in Macedonia (Babuna, 2000; Cardillo, 2010). “The new republic’s constitution promised to Albanians and other nationalities full equality as citizens and permanent co-existence with the Macedonian people, but the structural inequalities between the ethnic groups persisted fueling Albanian resentment” (Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004: 3). These inequalities are mainly based on employment opportunities, income level, living standards, education language etc. On the other side Macedonians did not trust Albanians and they were afraid of Albanian community’s disloyalty to the new state (Cardillo, 2010; Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004). Before 2001 conflict, “the relations between the Slav Macedonian majority and ethnic Albanian minority in Macedonia were considered tense, if not explosive”, but the tensions rose especially after 1991, when ethnic Albanians started to raise their voice and asked for their rights (Kim, 2002: 5).

Mainly ethnic Albanians were asking for more cultural, education and economic based rights (Kim, 2002). They wanted Albanian to be recognized as an official language; the Albanian-language University in Tetovo to be supported by the Macedonian state; more investments to be done in their regions; and more employment opportunities (Kim, 2002; Babuna, 2000). “There are deep-rooted economic, social, and ethnic problems exacerbating the relations between the two communities” (Babuna, 2000: 80). The number of Albanians in Macedonia has always been debatable; Albanians opposed 1994 census which showed that they constitute 22.9% of the populations, by claiming that they constitute 40% of the population (Kim, 2002, Babuna, 2000; Cardillo, 2010; Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004). This period was very critical for Macedonian state because discrimination of minorities inside Macedonia was a really important problem. Kosovo crisis at the end of the 1990s increased even more the tensions among ethnic Albanians and the Macedonian government (Kim, 2002: 5; Babuna, 2000). A lot of ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo flew into Macedonia during this period, but most of them returned to Kosovo in 2000. Violence between Albanians and Macedonians erupted in March 2001 when the National Liberation Army (NLA) of ethnic Albanians, asking for more cultural, economic, social and political rights and autonomy inside Macedonia, started an insurgency against Macedonian government, and Macedonian government began a counter insurgency (Kim, 2002).

After six months of fighting, in August 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed between the Macedonian government and ethnic Albanians, and a British-led NATO force entered the country to contribute to disarmament (Kim, 2002; Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004). The Ohrid Framework Agreement ended the armed conflict between NLA and Macedonian security forces and aimed the improvement of ethnic Albanians' rights. This agreement consisted of changes in the constitution to declare the Republic of Macedonia as a state of all its citizens; legal changes aiming non discrimination and equitable representation of all communities in the parliament; increasing the local autonomy; and the establishment of the official status of the languages that are spoken by at least 20% of the population (Brunnbauer, 2002). The constitutional amendments done by the Macedonian parliament, in 2001, gave broader rights to ethnic Albanians (Kim, 2002). The changes based on the Ohrid Agreement, gave greater recognition to the Albanian language, internal borders were redrawn and greater local autonomy was given to Albanians in the regions where they comprise the majority of the population (Kim, 2002; Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004: 3). Despite some changes and improvements the violent clashes and tensions among ethnic groups continue, because of the problems related to the implementation of the Ohrid Agreement.

Some important problems exist concerning the implementation of Ohrid Framework Agreement. Firstly, the main problematic issues on the implementation of this Agreement are related with the limited power sharing with different communities within Macedonia since mainly the focus has been on Albanian community (Mehmeti, 2008, Sulejmani, 2008; Vankovska, 2005). Secondly the Agreement lacks the implementation of an inclusive political system in Macedonia (Balalovska, 2006). Thirdly the institutions dealing with interethnic relations are undermined and a lack of transparency concerning Agreement implementation is observed. Lastly the Agreement instead of promoting a civic, unified Macedonian state idea, it effectively reinforces the ethnicization of the political life in Macedonia (Bieber et al., 2008). In such a context, where people do not feel close to each other, returning to the coexistence principle is difficult and cannot be achieved only with the meetings held by members of different communities at the top (Balalovska, 2006).

After presenting the conflicts of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and in Macedonia, it is important to have a look at the role of Albania as a kin state, the role of youth within Albania, and provide some information on the political parties of membership of the youths under research.

3.2. Albania, Youth in Albania and Parties of Membership

3.2.1. Albania's Role as a Kin-state

The support of Albania, as a kin state, has been an important factor encouraging ethnic mobilization of Macedonian and Kosovo Albanians, but this support was higher in ethnic mobilization of Albanians in Kosovo than in Macedonia. (Koinova, 2008, 373). According to the literature, states in transition period are more likely to support their kin ethnic groups' mobilization which leads us to understand that, beside affective ties, transition can be another important reason leading to moral and economic support to the kin ethnic group by the Albanian state (Koinova, 2008, 374). In Macedonia "the strategy of the Albanian community has been influenced by ethnic segmentarization, by the continuous division of the Albanian parties due to their radicalization, and by the role and policies of the Albanian state and the Kosovo kin elite" (Koppa, 2001, 41).

In Albanian ethno-mobilization in Kosovo the state of Albania itself is a very strong actor. Not only the direct involvement of the Albanian state, but just its existence was enough to increase the ethnic conscience of Albanians in Kosovo and "this involvement was not seen as foreign interference, but always as the patriotic duty of the Albanian state toward Albanians that were left outside Albania proper." (Murati et. al, 2007: 13). "During the 1980s, but more particularly after the 1990s a strong Albanian Diaspora in the West became a crucial external actor, providing significant financial support for the Albanian political movement and resistance in Kosovo and Macedonia" (Murati et.al, 2007, 15).

Recently, in Albania, youths are becoming very important actors in the political sphere. They may influence the approach of the kin state towards its kin groups' conflicts and in this regard it is essential to look at their role and importance kin groups' conflicts.

3.2.2. Role of Youths in Kin-state Albania

Youths are a group of society which is present in all the areas that shape kin state's actions. Youths' role becomes even more important in countries like Albania where they constitute a high rate of the whole population which is one of the highest rates of young population in Europe. Being a kin state with a high rate of young population increases the importance of the opinions or understanding of youths in Albania concerning the conflicts of their kin ethnic groups in Kosovo and in Macedonia.

There is seen a rising of ethnic and nationalist identity salience inside Albania especially after the independence of Kosovo; after the increase of violent clashes in Macedonia; and with the appearance of nationalist parties like Red-Black Alliance Party. Red Black Alliance Party is mostly supported by youths, and its main agenda is focused on Albanians' aspirations for identity, ethnic and national union; and protection of the rights of all Albanians throughout the world. The way the other parties in Albania approach ethnic conflict is not very clear and stable but still they try to remain bounded to the aims, agenda and policies of their parties.

Youth members of different political parties with different political ideologies are the selected sample in this research. For a better exploration of their understanding and approaches towards kin groups' conflicts some information on their parties of membership and these parties' ideologies are presented below. Moreover, this information may contribute to a better understanding of the relationship among party membership, ideology and youths' understanding of conflict.

3.2.3. Political Parties under Research

The Democratic Party, Socialist Party and Socialist Movement for Integration are the three largest political parties in Albania. According to the results declared by the Central Elections Commission in Albania, in the last elections¹⁴ the democratic party took 30.6 % of the votes, Socialist party took 41.5 %, Socialist Movement for

¹⁴ The June 2013 elections were held after the interviews of this research were conducted.

Integration took 10.5% and Red-Black Alliance party took 0.6% of the votes.¹⁵. Since the data were collected before the elections, the analysis is based on 2009 elections with the Democratic Party being the governing party and the other parties in this research are the opposition. Some general information on the ideologies of these parties and for the purpose of this research information on one nationalist party will be provided in this section.

The Democratic Party, established in 1990, is a center-right party, based on conservatism, liberal conservatism and Pro- European ideologies. Its statute presents its aims of employing in Albania a democracy based on free elections, the guarantee of equal rights and freedoms, rule of law, free market economy, and integration of Albania in Euro-Atlantic Institutions.¹⁶ Moreover, this party emerged as the first party against the communist regime that ruled Albania for 45 years.

The Socialist Party which is a center-left party was found in 1991 based on social democracy and social liberalism ideologies. Its statute reveals its aims of promoting contemporary social democratic doctrine by focusing on solidarity, social justice, rule of law, freedoms, respect of democracy, and development of the national economy.¹⁷

The Socialist Movement for Integration Party was formed in 2004, based on social democratic ideology and its statute concentrates on the development and improvement of the Albanian social, economic, and political situation that would lead it towards integration in Euro-Atlantic Institutions, mainly the EU¹⁸.

¹⁵ Central Elections Commission-Albania. Retrieved July 7, 2013 from <http://www.cec.org.al/>

¹⁶ The statute of Democratic Party (DP) of Albania, Democratic Party's Official Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://pd.al/partia/statuti/#1>

¹⁷ The statute of Socialist Party (DP) of Albania, Socialist Party's Official Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://www.ps.al/kush-jemi/statuti/>

¹⁸ The statute of Socialist Party for Integration (DP) of Albania, Socialist Party for Integration's Official Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://www.lsi.al/index.php?lang=AL>

The Red-Black Alliance (Aleanca Kuq e Zi), which took its name from a group of supporters or fans of the national football team of Albania, turned from an organization to a party in 2012, and it is based on nationalist ideology. The statute of the party presents among its main priorities the formation of an Albanian nation based on the rule of law, the protection of the rights of all Albanians wherever they live, and unification of ethnic Albanians.¹⁹

While the Red-Black Alliance Party openly expresses its approach toward kin groups in its foundation statute, the other parties have their own approaches too. The Democratic Party mentions among its priorities the protection of national interests and human rights of all Albanians wherever they reside by respecting the international acts and agreements, and globally accepted standards.²⁰ The Socialist party does not mention any approach towards Albania's kin groups in its statute, but declares itself as a party that brings together Albanian nationals from inside and outside Albania²¹. Socialist Movement for Integration does not mention anything regarding kin groups since its main focus is the EU integration of Albania, and claims that it supports and develops only policies that would serve this purpose.

After learning about the role of the kin state concerning its kin ethnic groups' conflicts; the importance of youth political participation, their understanding and their potential for becoming trouble makers or peace makers; this thesis focuses on combining this knowledge and discovering the understanding of kin-state's youth concerning their kin groups' conflicts. The methodology section provides information on how the study is conducted and measured.

¹⁹The Program of Red-Black Alliance Party. Red-Black Alliance Party's Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://www.aleancakuqezi.al/programi/>

²⁰ The statute of Democratic Party (DP) of Albania, Democratic Party's Official Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://pd.al/partia/statuti/#1>

²¹ The statute of Socialist Party (DP) of Albania, Socialist Party's Official Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://www.ps.al/kush-jemi/statuti/>

CHAPTER IV | METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research question, sub-questions and the methodology employed for data collection and analyses are presented. The objective of the chapter is to discuss the underlying reasons for methodology and case selection. The methodology of data analysis will also be explained.

The aim of this research is to explore the role of youth in peace or conflict by providing information on their understanding of peace and conflict, and focusing on their troublemaking and peacemaking capacities. This is an exploratory field research conducted by using qualitative interviewing method. Youth which are members of four different Albanian political parties' youth forums, and a group of youth without party membership, aged between 18 and 24 and living in Albania, were interviewed. The interviews are analyzed via text analysis technique.

4.1. Research Question

The research question of this study is **“How do youths in Albania understand their kin groups' conflicts, especially the conflicts of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia”?**

In addition to the main research question some issues that will be addressed in this research include: factors that shape youths' understanding of peace and conflict; reasons, motives, aspirations behind youths' party membership; effect of political activism on youths' understanding of peace and conflict; youths' thoughts on state's capacity, foreign policy, its relations with big powers and with its kin-groups; reasons leading youths to become trouble makers or peace makers; and the approach of Albanian youths towards their kin-groups' conflicts.

4.2. Qualitative and Exploratory Research

This research was conducted using qualitative research design, which places the researcher in the world and gives him/her the possibility to see the world from the eyes of the people being studied; to see how they see the world and what it means for them (Neuman, 2006; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative researcher tries to uncover and explain the meanings that people give to different phenomena, and emphasizes the social context for understanding the social world (Neuman, 2006). Different from quantitative research, which ignores the human factor and focuses on numbers, variables, hypotheses, and objectivity; the qualitative research takes in consideration the human factor and investigates social processes or cases in their social contexts (Neuman, 2006).

According to Neuman (2006), soft data like word, sentences, symbols, photos, and impressions are employed in qualitative research in order to examine the motives, ideas, distinctions, and themes. “Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials- case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional and visual text- that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives.” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 3). As Neuman states (2006), qualitative research methodology is used mostly by the researchers interested in doing exploratory research like examining a new topic.

Some important reasons make qualitative research design the appropriate methodology for this study, considering the scope of this research, which focuses on exploring the kin state’s youths’ understanding of their kin groups’ conflicts. Firstly, the aim of this research is not to test hypothesis like in quantitative research design methodology. Secondly, this study aims to address the research question on youth’s understanding or opinions that cannot be measured by numbers; they need to be explored and analyzed looking at themes, words, sentences, symbols etc. Thirdly, this research is based on finding out and analyzing the opinions of youth in natural settings, not under invented or researcher-created settings (Neuman, 2006: 383). Quantitative research design fails to address the above mentioned characteristics of this study and

qualitative research design is the most appropriate methodology since it fits to the scope and goal of this research.

Methodologically, in addition to the qualitative nature, this study has also exploratory nature. The aim of the research is to uncover not only youth's understanding of peace and conflict, but also to explore kin-state's youths' potential as peacemakers and trouble makers, so it focuses on youths outside the real conflict. In Conflict Resolution field not many studies have been focused on the role of youth as agents of peace or conflict, and the existing literature focuses mostly on the role of youths inside the conflict. This research concentrates on the unexplored opinions of youths outside the conflict, like kin-state's youths. Moreover, through conducting the research mainly on youths which are party members, this research attempts to explore the potentials of these youths to influence or be influenced by kin-state's policies toward kin-groups' conflicts.

4.3. Research Design

In this chapter a detailed description of the design of the study will be presented by explaining the research instrument, sample and unit of analysis used in data collection.

4.3.1. Qualitative Interview as Research Instrument

Qualitative interviewing, which is one of the most used research instruments in qualitative methodology, is the data gathering technique employed in this study. The main types of qualitative interview include: structured, semi-structured, unstructured; cultural, topical; face-to-face individual or group interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Qualitative interviewing helps the researcher to find out peoples' feelings and thoughts about their social context.

Interviews, which aim to explore what lies behind the observable events or experiences, appear as important instruments in data collection. Survey is another data collection technique but it does not fit in this research, since some important aspects of the collected data like in-depth insight on the feelings, emotions, behaviors and

understandings of the people participating in the survey are undermined. Interviewing can provide in-depth information and knowledge on the topic being researched and on interviewees' opinions, perceptions, ideas, feelings, beliefs and interpretations etc. This research has a qualitative exploratory nature focusing on exploring kin-state's youths' understanding of their kin-groups' conflict; the collection of data through numerical instruments would be very difficult, and qualitative interviewing is the instrument that fits more in this study's goal.

In this research semi-structured interview was used, since this type of interview is very useful for the researchers seeking for specific information on the topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Semi-structured interviews are controlled by the interviewer more than unstructured interviews and less than structured interview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Different from structured interviews where all questions are prepared before the interview is conducted, in semi-structured interview "the questions are more open and answers are recorded in more detail, and spaces are left for unanticipated issues, which arise in the course of conversation" (Mayoux, n.d.; 8). Semi-structured interview provides flexibility to the interaction or conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. In semi-structured interview the interviewer is less dependent on the prepared interview guide, does not have to follow a fixed set of questions and can guide the conversation with the interview. Still this type of interview necessitates the interviewer to ensure that some basic guidelines of interview are followed in all conducted interviews. Also, to be able to conduct a semi-structured interview the interviewer should be skillful and well-prepared (Gaskel in Bauer & Gaskell, 2000).

According to Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991), semi-structured interview is an appropriate instrument for in-depth study of opinions, perceptions, motivations and attitudes. Thus, this technique fits in the research question of this study, whose objective is to explore the kin-state's youths' understanding of their kin-groups' conflicts.

4.3.2. Research Sample

The sampling technique used to conduct this research and the unit of analysis being researched in this study will be explained in this chapter, for a better understanding of the research sample.

4.3.2.1. Sampling Technique

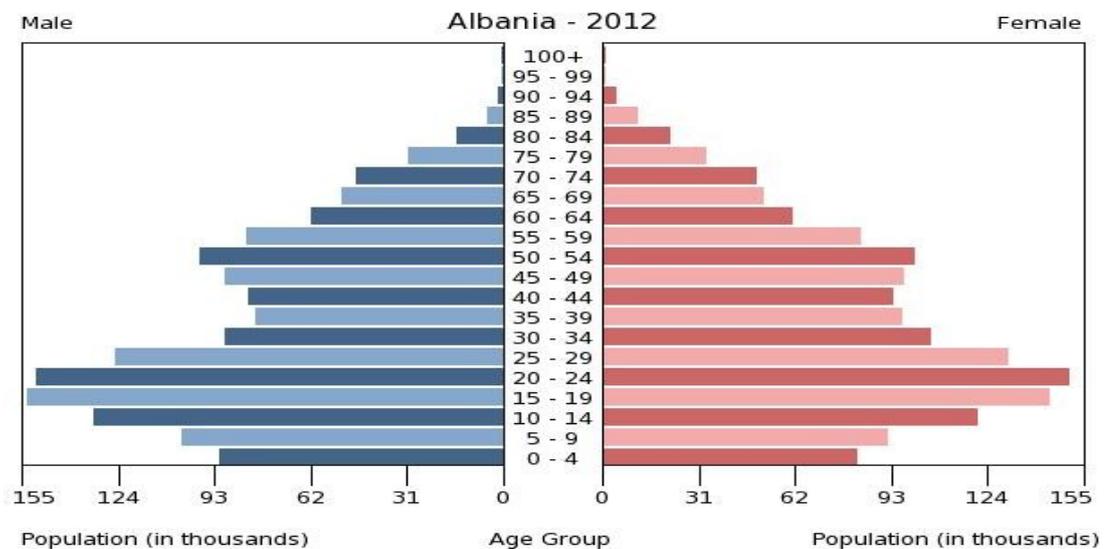
As discussed above the data used in this research were collected through semi-structured interviews. The sample used is determined by non-random sampling. Interviewees were not chosen as representatives of the population, but according to their relevance to the topic under research.

As stated by Neuman (2006), qualitative research and quantitative research have different ways of approaching sampling. The tendency of qualitative researchers is on using non-random sampling (Neuman, 2006). The focus of qualitative research is not representativeness of the sample or finding probability sample; they focus on how the sample illuminates social life, and the main purpose is to gather specific cases, actions, activities and events that can contribute to an in-depth understanding (Neuman, 2006). Therefore, for qualitative researchers “it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected” (Neuman, 2002: 220).

Haphazard sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling are some types of non-random sampling. Purposive sampling which means “selecting the cases with a specific purpose in mind” is used in this research and this type of sampling is ‘appropriate to select unique cases that are especially informative (Neuman, 2002; 222). This research examines a specific group of youth population which includes youth in the kin-state. To address the questions in this research more specific selection among youth population is needed and politically engaged youth meaning youth that are members of political parties became the final target. In order to explore the troublemaker or peace builder potentials of politically engaged youths, this research focuses on youths which are member of different political parties’ youth forums, having different political ideologies with the purpose of understanding from the sample the role that political ideology may play on youths’ understanding on peace and conflict. Moreover, a group of youths without party membership were interviewed, with the purpose of understanding whether party membership matter or has any influence on interviewees’ opinions.

Quota sampling and snowball sampling are two sub-categories of purposive sampling and this research employs snowball sampling. Snowball sampling implies that based on sampling criteria a small group of people is identified and the other people are reached directly or indirectly through the networks of the people of the initial group (Neuman, 2006: 223; Bryman, 2004). The interviewees in this research were found through the contacts or networks of some youths, member or not of political parties or political parties' youth forums, reached through researchers' network. The statistics show that in Albania youth aged between 15 and 24 comprise 19.6% of the whole population (male 300,977/female 287,976)²² Unfortunately there are not data on the number of youth engaged in Albanian political youth forums.

Figure 4.1 Albanian youth population (in thousands)



4.3.2.2. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study includes youths in Albania aged between 18 and 24, which comprises the age limits for youth according to UN, and focuses mainly on youths which are members of political parties' youth forums in Albania. Also another category of youth, which are not members of any political party's youth forum, is included in this research to see if party membership has any influence on youths'

²² CIA World Fact-book-Albania Retrieved April 17, 2013 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html>

opinions. Even though the role of youth in Albania has been subject of study in different areas, they have not been under study as an actor within the kin-state in a kin state – kin group relationship and in conflict resolution field.

According to Neuman (2002: 156) “The unit of analysis refers to the type of unit a researcher uses when measuring and determining how a researcher measures variables or themes”. In this research individuals are the unit of analysis. Youths aged between 18-24, members of one of the four important Albanian political parties’ (Democratic Party, Socialist Party, Socialist Movement for Integration Party and Red and Black Alliance Party) youths’ forums constitute the unit of analysis of this study. The reasons for this case selection are presented later. It is important to emphasize that politically engaged youths in Albania in this research are seen as potential actors in the development of Albania (kin-state) - Macedonian Albanians (kin-group) relations and Albania (kin-state) - Kosovo Albanians (kin-group) relations. As a result of having youth within kin-state umbrella, this research focuses on individuals (youth) within a specific country (kin-state). Additionally, the individuals under study are members of youth forums, meaning that they are part of a group and the groups may differ from each other. Still the focus of this research is on individuals, whose approach to peace or conflict can be influenced but also can influence the groups’ and kin-state’s approaches.

In this study fourteen personal or individual, face to face interviews were conducted and recorded with members of four main political parties’ youth forums in Albania and with youths from an independent group, by using snowball sampling method.

Two categories of interviewee are present in this study. One category of interviewee is consisted of youths members of political parties’ youth forums, which are the primary focus of this study, and are chosen to explore their understanding of their kin-groups’ conflicts. The other category is the control group which includes youths that are not member in any political party’s youth forum. Control group is mainly used in experimental design where the “researcher divides the subjects into two or more groups for the purpose of comparison” (Neuman, 2006: 253). Even though this is not an experimental design the control group is included for the purpose of comparison with

the uncontrolled group; to see whether party membership matters in the formation of youths' understanding of peace and conflict.

The explanation of why this case is chosen and why specific political parties' youth forums are chosen will be presented in the following chapter.

4.4. Case Selection

Youths are one of the actors within kin-states, meaning that they can contribute to kin-state's approach toward its kin-groups, and youths with party membership are considered as important actors within kin-states. Different factors can shape youths' understanding or opinions and their understanding may shape their behaviors, attitudes and approaches. To understand the role of youths as troublemakers or peacemakers it is important to look at their understanding on peace and conflict.

The selection of Albania as a site for conducting this research is based on some important reasons. Firstly, this research looks at youths in kin-state, since from kin-state literature the approach of the kin-state toward its' kin minorities' conflict is important and can contribute to either conflict or peace. Therefore the selected country should be a kin state having kin-minorities abroad and Albania fits in this condition since it is a kin-state for the ethnic Albanians living outside the Albanian borders, mainly in the Balkans like in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro.

Secondly, this research explores kin state's youths' understanding of kin-minorities' conflicts meaning that the selected kin-state should have kin-minorities experiencing conflict. Albania fulfills this condition too, since recently ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and in Macedonia have been experiencing and continue to experience ethnic conflicts with other ethnic groups.

Thirdly, youths in Albania comprise a high rate of the population, which is one of the highest youth population rate in Europe, and this makes Albania a good place to conduct research on youths. Moreover, recently ethnic identity has gained importance in Albania especially with Kosovo independence, increase in violent clashes in Macedonia, foundation of nationalist parties like Red-Black Alliance, and with the 100th

year of independence celebrations, which were accompanied with patriotic and nationalist rhetoric, atmosphere and celebrations.

Therefore Albania is a kin-state, with kin-groups experiencing conflict, with a high rate of youth population and a raising ethnic identity emphasizes, and all these make this country a suitable place for exploring kin state's youths' understanding of kin-minorities' conflicts.

In a country where youth comprises a high rate of population, some important reasons led to the selection of youths that are members of political parties' youth forums as the target of this research. Firstly, compared to other portions of youth population, they have more political power since they are more engaged in politics. With more political power and access they have more possibilities for promoting their contribution, but still their contribution is bounded by the will of decision makers to hear their voice. Even though their influence on decision making can change they are more advantageous than other youths. Whether their contribution will be positive or negative, whether they will be peacemakers or trouble makers is an issue under exploration in this study.

Secondly, the existing literature on youth presents them as "being" and "becoming" individuals meaning that their present and future roles makes politically engaged youths important. On one side they have a possibility to continue their career in politics and become the future politicians and leaders, so their understanding of peace and conflict can shape their behaviors once they have more power. While their role in the future is important, their present role is very essential. Youths can use their party membership in different ways; for example they can promote peace or trouble depending on their aims and motives behind party membership. They can acquire party membership because of a range of reasons like their aspirations, interests, ideologies etc.

Also, we should consider the possibility that politically engaged youths can be manipulated by their political ideologies and these ideologies can influence their understanding of peace and conflict too. While youths with party membership, relative to those without party membership, may contribute more in shaping kin-state's approach toward kin-minorities' conflicts, they can also become troublemakers when

they feel excluded by state's policies. Also they have more power to criticize state's policies and attitudes toward peace and conflict and can mobilize easier in order to influence state politics. They can reach easier to a high portion of population through their networks, and can mobilize other youths to be trouble makers or peace makers depending on their understanding of the conflict.

Youths which are members of political parties youth forums may have more political power and say than others, can be the leaders of the future, have mobilization resources and capabilities, can influence kin-state's approach but can also be influenced by political ideologies and leaders. Overall their tendency toward peace or conflict depends on their understanding of peace and conflict that can be shaped by a range of factors. They will act according to their understanding, and their actions may influence kin-state domestic and foreign policies. They can support the state or not depending on their opinions and trust on state's capacity, on the level that they feel they can contribute and influence the state policies, and on their understanding of peace and conflict.

Politically engaged youths in this research are members of youth forums of four different political parties in Albania: Democratic Party, Socialist Party, Socialist Movement for Integration Party, and Red-Black Alliance Party. These four political parties are selected because of some important reasons. Firstly, the first two parties, Democratic Party and Socialist Party are the biggest political parties in Albania. According to the Central Election Commission in Albania in the 2009 elections Democratic Party took 40,18% of the votes and Socialist Party took 40,85% of the votes.²³ Even though being small relative to the two biggest parties in the country, Socialist Movement for Integration Party is the third biggest party having 4, 85 % of the votes in the 2009 elections.²⁴ Deriving from their turnout percentages, it is possible to say that these three biggest parties have the highest number of youth members and youths of these parties' youth forums can be more powerful than members of other political parties' youth forums. On the other hand, Red Black Alliance is a new party that has not participated in any election yet, but it is a nationalist party, that has gives

²³ Central Election Committee-Albania. 2009 Parliamentary Elections Results Retrieved April 19, 2013 from http://www.cec.org.al/images/stories/zgjedhje-per-kuvend/2009/rez_vend.pdf

²⁴ *ibid*

national and ethnic identity issues as its main priority. For the purpose of this research I interviewed three youths from each of the three biggest political parties' youth forums, two youths from Red-Black Alliance party since it is smaller and not part of decision making and three independent youth that do not participate in any political youth forum.

Another reason for selecting these political parties' youth forums is related to their ideologies, so the role of ideology in youths understanding of peace and conflict can be derived from the sample itself. All these four parties belong to four different political ideologies, but whether their approaches to peace or conflict are different remains to be seen. Democratic Party is expected to pursue more liberal policies and approaches; Socialist Party which is social democracy is expected to be more sensitive toward nationalist issues, but still they do not emphasize nationalism; Socialist Movement for Integration Party is more focused on the integration of Albania within international bodies rather than nationalism or ethnic identity. The main reason for selecting Red-Black Alliance as the fourth party is related to the fact that it is a nationalist party with statute and priorities focusing on the support and protection of ethnic Albanians identity and rights every time and everywhere. The leaders of the party use nationalist rhetoric in their speeches and they concentrate on the conflicts and problems of ethnic Albanians everywhere. As it can be understood the three biggest parties do not have specific policies towards kin groups; they are not nationalist parties, but when needed and when it is in their interests they know very well to emphasize their patriotism.

Except the Red-Black Alliance Party, other parties comprise most of the seats in the Albanian parliament and have more decision making right, so the approach and policies of the kin-state are more bounded to these parties' approaches. On the other side Red Black Alliance, even though not included in decision making apparatus, has an increasing mobilization power and capabilities. Recently, they are gaining support and attention of the people by emphasizing the ethnic Albanians' unification, support and protection and they are going to be part of June 2013 elections. They gained popularity because of their nationalist approach especially during 2012, which was a symbolic year for all ethnic Albanians representing the 100th year of Albanian Independence. Emphasizing ethnic identity in such a crucial time would be a beneficial strategy for ethnic mobilization.

Even though all mentioned political parties have their own ideologies and approaches concerning domestic and foreign issues, it is difficult to understand whether youths' opinions are shaped by these ideologies or approaches, or youths are contributing in shaping their parties' policies which may affect state's approaches. In order to understand whether youths may have any kind of contribution in the formation of state's approach to peace or conflict, it is important to concentrate on the political parties that have decision making and mobilization power.

Being a kin-state, having kin-minority experiencing conflict and having a high rate of youth population makes Albania a good case for research. Also being politically engaged in one of the most important political parties' youth forums in Albania is important for exploring kin-state's youths' understanding of peace and conflict, especially on their kin-groups conflicts.

The interview contains questions that are grouped in three main sets. In the first part of the interview the questions focus on youths and their party membership. This part includes personal question to the interviewee based on the reasons, motives, aims and expectations from behind their party membership. Their opinion on other types of engagement like NGOs and demonstrations, on their expected contribution to politics and the influence of youth in Albanian politics are included in this part. In the second part the focus is on the youths' understanding of the conflicts of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and in Macedonia. In this part the causes, issues, parties, current situation and possible solution steps for ethnic Albanians' conflicts are asked to the interviewees. Their opinion on the formation of an ethnic Albania, the capacities and challenges of the Albanians state to protect its kin groups, and the possible contribution of the Albanian state in the resolution of these conflicts are asked too. The last part of the interview is concentrated on the relations of Albania with its kin ethnic groups in Kosovo and in Macedonia; interviewed youth's opinions on the approaches and policies of the Albanian state towards its kin groups; their suggestions on what should be done in the future concerning ethnic Albanians' conflicts; and interviewees own approaches to kin groups' conflicts resolution.

4.5. Data Analysis

Different from the quantitative analysis, which focuses on describing the data through statistical means, qualitative data analysis aims to uncover the non-observable things like emotions, values, attitudes, opinions or perceptions (Neuman, 2006).

Being a qualitative and exploratory research, the present study employs text analysis for analyzing the data collected through semi-structured interviews. The researchers using text analysis “examine words, sentences, paragraphs, pages, documents, ideas, meanings, paralinguistic features and even what is missing in the text” (Ryan, 1998:628). Throughout this research the transcriptions of conducted interviewees were analyzed focusing mainly in the words, themes, and opinions in the transcribed text. In order to understand youths’ understanding of peace and conflict and derive themes, the researcher rereads the transcribed text (Neuman, 2006; Robin and Robin, 1995).

In this study, after rereading the transcribed texts for several times, the researcher attempted to explain the collected data through common themes that appear in the texts and added quotations from the collected data in order to support the findings.

CHAPTER V | DATA ANALYSIS

This study's main research question is "*How do youths in the kin state understand their kin groups' conflicts?*" Answering this question also helps one to understand whether and how youth would contribute to peace and conflict. To study this question the understanding of youth in Albania on ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia were selected as a case study. A total of 14 interviews were conducted with youth, aged between 18 and 24, from four different Albanian political parties' youth forums and with a group of youth that were not members of any political party's youth forum.

As previously explained, in the methodology chapter, in addition to the interviews conducted with youths with party membership, a separate category of interviews with three not politically engaged or independent young people were conducted as a control group. This group was selected with the purpose of understanding whether party membership matters or influences youths' understanding of peace and conflict. The data based on the interviews with youth from different political parties' youth forums and from the control group are presented below.

It is important to make some remarks before continuing with the analysis. Firstly, to respect confidentiality of the interviewees their names were replaced with randomly assigned numbers. Secondly, the terms 'most' or 'majority' were used if that theme was stated by more than half of the interviewees, and the term 'almost all' was used if, except one or two interviewees, all the others mentioned that theme.

In accordance with the research question and the findings, the analysis is split to four main sections: youth and party membership, Albanian youths' understanding of ethnic Albanians' conflicts, youths' understanding of kin state's role, and youths' troublemaking and peacemaking capabilities.

5.1. Youth Profile and Party Membership

5.1.1. Youth Profile

Three interviews, including at least one female and one male, were conducted for each forum of the three biggest political parties, DP, SP, and LSI, and two interviews were conducted with youth from Red-Black Alliance party's youth forum considering that it is a small party relative to other three parties. The interviewees belong to different political parties that are based on different political ideologies. In total, eight females and six males were interviewed. Seven interviewees were students, four were students and employed, two were just employed, and only one was unemployed. Except for one person, who considered himself as lower class, all other interviewed youth defined themselves as members of middle class. Concerning their positions in the youth forum, four interviewees were youth coordinators, two were youth forum members, one was head of a municipality's forum, one in the youth forum presidency, and three were both youth coordinator and party's presidency members.

Table 5.1: Interviewed Youth's Profile

Interviewee	Party	Age	Gender	Job	Socio-economic status	Position
Nr.1	PD	19	Male	Student	Middle class	Forum Member
Nr.2	PD	21	Female	Student	Middle class	Forum Coordinator
Nr.3	PD	24	Female	Student + Employed	Middle class	Youth Forum Presidency Member
Nr.4	PS	24	Male	Unemployed	Lower class	Head of Municipality Youth Forum
Nr.5	PS	24	Female	Student	Middle class	Forum Coordinator
Nr.6	PS	23	Female	Student + Employed	Middle class	Forum Coordinator
Nr.7	LSI	18	Male	Student	Middle class	Forum Coordinator + LSI Presidency Member
Nr.8	LSI	23	Female	Employed	Middle class	Forum Vice-President + LSI Presidency Member
Nr.9	LSI	20	Female	Student	Middle class	Forum Coordinator
Nr.10	AK	22	Male	Student	Middle class	Forum Member
Nr.11	AK	20	Male	Student	Middle class	Coordinator + AK Presidency Member
Nr.12	None	24	Male	Employed	Middle class	None
Nr.13	None	22	Female	Student + Employed	Middle class	None
Nr.14	None	23	Female	Student + Employed	Middle class	None

Let us, first analyze the motives behind youth's party membership and then look at their understanding of peace and conflict.

5.1.2. Youth and Party Membership

This part of the analysis addresses the motives that encouraged interviewees to choose political party membership in general, and membership to youth political forums in special. From the collected data a total of three main common themes were derived regarding the motives behind youth's party membership including contribution to politics and party; bringing change; and exploring, socializing and having new experiences in politics. Concerning the motives behind their engagement in political forums, the interviewees stated that they considered youth forums as the most influential form of political participation in Albania. In the following sub parts, these membership motives are explained.

One of the common findings, regarding interviewees' party membership motives was their desire and goal for contribution to politics and party. Four interviewees expressed their aim for contribution to their respective parties, and six interviewees emphasized their desire for contribution to politics in general since in their opinion contribution to politics means more contribution to their country, adding voting and bringing new ideas as forms of contribution too.

I think that everyone has his desire and will to serve and contribute to his country, but I think that a good politician can do the best and biggest contribution (#3, 27.04.2013).

My strongest contribution would be my vote, voting for the one I think would be the best choice for Albania. And also my biggest contribution, more then to politics in general, is going to be a contribution to the party that I am a forum member of (#5, 13.03.2013).

Half of the interviewees stated their aim and will for contribution, through their party membership, to the society and to their country mainly by bringing change. They mentioned their dislike on how current politics in Albania function, the need for new

ideas in Albanian politics, and their desire for contributing to a better future as the main reasons motivating them to aim bringing change.

Considering the political and economical situation and unemployment problems, I decided to engage in politics to change something (#4, 20.02.2013).

For me always the idea of being part of politics is based on change, to make something different, to bring a change. I want to change some things in my area of expertise despite how much this change can be; even a small change would be important (#10, 05.03.2013).

Taking into consideration my abilities in this field and the Albanian reality, which is unacceptable for the people, I decided to join a political party to make the change. Change in the sense of changing the actual political elite and bringing new people who have knowledge in every field and are able to lead an x party (#11, 20.03.2013).

Another theme that appeared during the interviews was the interest of the interviewees in gaining experience in politics and finding spaces for socialization. Four interviewees mentioned, among their motives for engagement in party politics, their desire to explore inside functioning of political parties and their willingness for some new experiences in politics, and people's interactions and socialization.

I became my party's youth forum member in order to see the way how this forum functions inside, how politics functions, and in a way to understand how they are related to justice (#2, 23.04.2013).

Practically what I expect from politics is to gain a kind of experience related to relationships with people, organizations, knowing people and having information concerning everyday activities (#9, 02.04.2013).

Most of the interviewed youth highlighted that youth political forums are the most influential form of engagement in Albanian politics. They emphasized that the

voice of youths is heard more through youth forums, which at the same time provide space to work on more issues simultaneously.

If I would go to an NGO, I would be in a place where no one would listen to my voice. It is something like a lot of noise for nothing. But the situation is different with youth forums... I am talking about the main youth forums (PD, PS, LSI)...As far as parties are influential, forums are influential, too (#1, 13.02.2013).

Even though I call it a bad luck, youth forums are appreciated more for their professionalism and achievements... Youth forums are more important if you want to be successful in your career (#2, 23.04.2013).

Youth forums are related to politics and are more active in more areas, they have to talk about everything in every place (#10, 05.03.2013).

The data coming out of this research show the aim and desire of the majority of interviewed youth, from all political forums under research, for contribution to politics in general. In fact, they considered their party membership as one of the largest contribution they could make to their country. Interviewees, despite their political ideologies, expressed their discontent on the way Albanian politics functions and claimed their willingness to bring change. While some interviewees stated their aim for bringing new ideas and changes for a better future in Albania, interviewed youth from the biggest opposition parties blamed the current government for the bad functioning of politics in Albania.

Most of the interviewees, whether members of political parties' youth forums or not, were interested in politics. There were also youth, which were motivated by their desire to learn how politics function and how people interact in such an environment. So, despite their disappointment from the current political culture in Albania, politically engaged youths with different political ideologies had the courage to engage in politics to bring change and perhaps even a new political culture. This is in contrast to youth who were not politically engaged, who were interested in politics but did not attempt to engage in order to change something. Moreover, almost all of the interviewees found youth forums to be the most influential form of engagement in Albanian politics; as a

place where they can raise their voice and where their voice can be heard more than in other places such as NGOs for example.

The data of this research did not show important differences among the interviewed youth with different political ideologies concerning the motives behind their party membership. Their motives focused more on contribution to Albanian politics and their parties' of membership, bringing change and learning more about politics. Almost all of them considered youth forums as the most suitable spaces through which they can realize their goals.

5.1.3. Influence of Youth in Politics

Majority of the interviewees stated that there is not enough space for Albanian youth in politics. Three different themes appeared in this regard. Five interviewees mentioned that Albanian youth do not have any influence at all. Six interviewees stated that, even though not as needed, somehow youth influence Albanian politics, and four others claimed that their influence changes from one party to the other. All of them emphasized that a lot more should be done and more space should be provided to youth in Albanian politics since they can have important contributions.

Another reason in my opinion is that youths do not have enough space to participate in politics or in decision making (#12, 11.04.2013).

At least as I look from inside it seems very active. The influence then varies, there are forums that seem to have more influence to their party and to politics in general and there are forums that have less. But they should have more than what they have now (#9, 25.02.2013).

Youth forums function well and have influence in Albanian politics, a lot of deputies or people in important positions today have come out from these youth forums (#3, 27.04.2013).

The majority of the interviewees, mainly from the three largest parties' youth forums, stated that youth have some kind of influence in Albanian politics even though

not as much as they should have. Moreover, some of them mentioned that the influence of youth is strongly related with the influence of their parties. Some other interviewees from the opposition parties emphasized that there is not enough space for youth in Albanian politics; youths are used, mainly during election campaigns or for organizing different activities and their role is not appreciated. Despite their political ideologies, almost all the interviewed youth highlighted the need for increasing youth inclusion in Albanian politics in order to provide spaces to them through which they can give their contribution to their country.

Even though the interviewed youth found youth forums as the most influential spaces in Albanian politics, they claimed that more space should be provided to youth in Albanian politics in order for them to realize their goals for contribution to party and politics, for bringing change and gaining experience in the field of politics. Whether youth will bring a positive or negative contribution is a discussable topic and their understanding of the issues and events may shape their behaviors and attitudes. To have a better idea on the role of the Albanian youth on ethnic Albanians' conflicts, it is essential to look firstly at their understanding of these conflicts.

5.2. Albanian Youth's Understanding of Ethnic Albanians' Conflicts

5.2.1. Causes of Ethnic Albanians' Conflicts

5.2.1.1. Similarities

In this research, four main themes appeared as similar reasons for ethnic Albanians' conflict in Kosovo with Serbia, and ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia with Macedonian state. These themes included history, the injustice done to Albanians, the aggression against Albanians, and territory.

Eight interviewees, mentioned history as one of the main causes of ethnic Albanians conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia. They stated that these conflicts are very old and have their roots back in 1912-1913, when the Conference of Ambassadors in London recognized an independent Albanian state but left outside the borders of Albania almost 30% of its population (Elsie, 1997).

To answer this question {concerning causes of ethnic Albanians conflict in Macedonia} we should look back into the history. Surely that conflict causes have their roots in the early history. Albanians in Macedonia have been in conflict since the moment when they were left outside the borders of Albania (#13, 21.04.2013).

If we look at Kosovo's history, for hundreds of years Kosovo's territory has been inhabited by our people, Illyrians, today's Albanians. Unfortunately because of borders injustices Kosovo remained outside Albanian borders, within the territory of ex-Yugoslavian territory (#1).

In most of the interviews, territory appeared as another important cause of ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia and it was strongly related with the themes of history and injustices. As stated by one of the interviewees, "*just the inclusion of the Albanian population inside the borders of another country may be a source of conflict that has its roots in the decision on the division of borders {in 1912-1913}*" (#12, 11.04.2013).

However, I still think that the most important reason for conflict is territory. I think this is more important than the issue of ethnicity and culture (#7, 18.03.2013).

A majority of the interviewees mentioned territory as an important issue in both conflicts, by highlighting that the roots of both conflicts extend to the unjust territorial division of 1912-1913, when the territories inhabited by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia were left outside Albania's border. For most of the interviewed youth, these territories are still Albanian lands.

Five interviewees stated that injustices done to ethnic Albanians comprise an important cause of ethnic Albanians' conflicts. For most of the interviewees, injustices were related to territorial division of 1913, rights' violations and discrimination of ethnic Albanians.

Kosovo for sure wanted independence...we have been living together with all Albanians, but we have unjustly been divided (#6, 15.04.2013).

Albanian population in Macedonia is just asking for their rights. A lot of injustice is done to Albanian population in Macedonia...a lot of discrimination is done against them (#1, 13.02.2013).

Aggression against Albanians is mentioned as another cause of ethnic Albanians' conflicts, by four of the interviewees. Mainly they considered this aggression as both a cause of the conflicts, and also a reason for its continuance.

The current situation in {Macedonia} can be considered much tensioned. Every day we are hearing about conflict, clashes, Albanian people are damaged, different clashes on institutions have happened; the flag is burned that is a very offensive act. So the main cause for the continuance of the conflict is the continuing aggressiveness of Macedonians (#6, 15.04.2013).

The majority of the interviewees, despite their political ideologies, mentioned history, territory, injustices and aggression against Albanians as the main causes of ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia. Youth with nationalist ideology were slightly different than the other youth by using stronger expressions like 'hate' against Albanians as an important cause of both conflicts. They considered these conflicts as parts of a larger ethnic identity conflict among Albanians and Slavs. So, while the majority of the interviewees mentioned history, territory, injustices and aggression as the main causes of the conflicts, youth with nationalist ideology go further by emphasizing that these were conflicts among Albanians and Slavs, fueled by the hate against Albanians.

5.2.1.2. Differences

Interviewees added two main themes, different for each conflict, to the common causes of ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia. These two themes include the issue of independence for Kosovo conflict case and violation of rights for the case of ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia. Whereas they mostly saw the conflict between the Kosovo Albanians and Serbia as resulting from territorial control over Kosovo, they stated that the conflict between the ethnic Albanians in Macedonia

and Macedonians were about the violation of the rights of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia.

Majority of the participants mentioned that ethnic Albanians in Kosovo were fighting for independence. They stated that Kosovo Albanians wanted to have an independent state, and Serbia was against it because it wanted territorial control over Kosovo.

Serbia wanted Kosovo to be part of Serbia even by staying as an autonomous region. The demands of Kosovo side are based on the issue of independence and now they are independent (#10, 05.03.2013).

Since Kosovo has lots of resources, it has been a target territory continuously by Serbia. So that is the main reason why Serbia wants to have this territory under control (#13, 21.04.2013).

According to most of the interviewees, violation of rights and discrimination of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia are the main causes of ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia with the Macedonian state.

Every nation, every community, everyone should be free and equal. Albanians in Macedonia have been treated as second class citizens. Even though they live in their lands, even though they comprise 30 % of the population they were not allowed to speak in their language, to practice their traditions and use their symbols. This for sure, is not normal and no one can say that Albanians in Macedonia are guilty for that conflict (#3, 27.04.2013).

Albanians in Macedonia have been in conflict since the moment when they were left outside the borders of Albania. There has been an absence of respect concerning their rights and they are not treated as citizens of that country. Why? Because they do not have equal rights (#13, 21.04.2013)

While interviewees mentioned many common causes of Kosovo and Macedonian conflicts, they emphasized important differences about the goals of ethnic

Albanians in each of these conflicts, and the interviewed youths' political ideology did not make any difference in this regard. Almost all interviewees mentioned that the main issue in the Kosovo conflict was the clash of Kosovo's aim for independence with Serbia's aim for territorial control over Kosovo. They stated that in the Macedonian conflict the main cause was the violation and discrimination of ethnic Albanians' rights by the Macedonia state. Shortly, the interviewees pointed to a difference among these two conflicts, by emphasizing that in one of them ethnic Albanians were struggling for independence and in the other they were struggling against the violation of their rights. According to most of the interviewees, ethnic Albanians are justified in their struggle, considering the aggression, violence and discrimination used by Serbs and Macedonians against ethnic Albanians.

5.2.2. Parties in Ethnic Albanians' Conflicts

All interviewees mentioned Kosovo and Serbia as the main parties in the Kosovo conflict, and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and Macedonian state as the main parties in ethnic Albanians conflict in Macedonia.

The main parties are Serbia and Kosovo. I think that even though we {the Albanians} have Balkan blood, we are behaving quiet and in a diplomatic way, but the other side in a violent and arrogant way (#4 20.02.2013).

I think that the conflict is mainly between the internal parties that are the Macedonian state and the Albanian opposition that are in a kind of verbal war with each other. And mainly are Albanians against the Macedonian state there (#14 05.05.2013).

While the majority of the interviewees mentioned Albania as a party in the Kosovo conflict, five participants mentioned it as a party in the conflict between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. This difference is a result of their opinions that Albanian state has been dealing more with Kosovo and is more interested in it. The interviewees emphasized that Albania supports ethnic Albanians because of kinship relations and interests.

Kosovo and Serbian states, these are the main parties, but Albanian state is also included {in Kosovo conflict}, our politics, reactions have an important role{in this conflict}. As far as I have seen until now the intervention of the Albanian state has been a good intervention aiming to keep the balance among the main parties, at least in my opinion it is so (#9, 25.02.2013).

Another actor for example can be Albania, for example nationalist declarations, especially the last ones done by representatives of Albania and Albanian politicians can lead to an increase of tensions among conflicting parties (#12, 11.04.2013).

As stated by most the interviewees, the USA and EU are also important parties in ethnic Albanians conflicts' in both Kosovo and Macedonia. According to the interviewees, these parties are involved in these conflicts because they want to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Like I said, some other parties include the international organizations and some other big countries like the US that are interested in having peaceful regions and not a Balkan full of conflicts (#13, 21.04.2013).

The strongest ally for Kosovo has been America. I was in Kosovo yesterday and I saw the monument of Bill Clinton in Pristine. As the president in the time of war he was a strong supporter of Kosovo. This was a positive factor (#7, 18.03.2013).

Concerning the external influence I think that the EU and the US have done a great job by supporting Kosovo until it became independent. Now they have their own state, own structures, and they have the capabilities to protect these structures (#14, 05.05.2013).

On the other side, ten interviewees mentioned Russia as a strong supporter of the Serbian cause, and five of them stated that both Russia and Serbia are strong supporters of Macedonia. The interviewees considered these parties' common ethnic identity as the main reason behind their supportive approaches toward each other.

Serbia is not alone, its main ally is Russia, and by this alliance they aim to have the whole Balkans. Kosovo is independent now, but since it has not won the independence by itself but UN, NATO and the US have provided it, Kosovo and Serbia are not in conflict with each other but respectively with the US and Russia (#11, 20.03.2013).

Concerning other indirect parties are Serbia and Russia in the Macedonian side (#10, 05.03.2013).

In ethnic Albanians' conflicts the interviewees mentioned three types of parties, primary parties in the conflict, international actors and the kin state. Concerning the primary parties all the interviewees mentioned Kosovo and Serbia and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia and the Macedonian state as the main parties in the conflicts. The interviewed youth identified Russia as Serbia's supporter and Serbia and Russia as supporters of the Macedonians. They identified this alliance as 'the aggressors'. The interviewees with nationalist ideology considered the support of Russia for Serbia and of both Serbia and Russia for Macedonia based on their common ethnic identity. On the other side, most of the interviewees mentioned the EU and US as supporters of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia, as parties involved in the conflict with the aim of ensuring peace and stability in the region. So, the majority of the interviewees defined supporters of ethnic Albanians as peace defenders and the supporters of Macedonia and Serbia as aggressors. Youth with nationalist ideology considered common ethnic identity as a strong bond among people.

As previously stated Albania, as a kin state, was mentioned as a party in the Kosovo conflict by the majority of the interviewees and by some of them in the Macedonian conflict. A majority of the interviewees stated that the Albanian state has been attracted more by Kosovo since the Kosovo conflict has been more violent, Albanians there comprise the majority, and they were aiming for a separate state with Albanian ethnic identity. Some of the interviewees, mainly from the opposition parties, put the responsibility on the current government for not dealing enough with the conflicts of ethnic Albanians. Moreover, despite political ideology, the interviewees mentioned Albania as a party when it supported ethnic Albanians through a nationalist

approach, and did not mention it as a party when it supported peaceful contribution to ethnic Albanians' conflict resolution.

5.2.3. Current situation and possible solution

More than half of the interviewees expressed their opinion that conflicts in both Kosovo and Macedonia are not totally closed. They mentioned that even though tensions are reduced, in some regions clashes continue. According to the interviewees these conflicts continue, even if not violently, they will continue as psychological conflicts for some more time.

In some regions yes, if we look at the conflict in broader terms the tensions are reduced, some specific regions are going to resolution, but there is a possibility for the tensions there to continue for a long time (#12, 11.04.2013).

Yes it (Kosovo conflict) continues maybe not as a real or violent conflict, but more as an ideological or psychological conflict (#1, 13.02.2013).

Majority of the interviewees, with different political ideologies, considered the conflict of ethnic Albanians as not totally closed, based on their opinion that these are ethnic identity conflicts and identity related conflicts cannot be easily ended within a short time period.

5.2.4. The Idea of Greater Albania

Different opinions were expressed by the interviewees concerning the idea of a greater ethnic Albania. Six interviewees stated that they do not support territorial unification of ethnic Albanians, because they think that it would bring problems and instability in the region and they are against such instabilities that would not benefit anyone.

I am for a separate Albanian state, for a powerful, solid state that will protect the rights of its citizens. Albanians in Macedonia are living in their territories, too.

Anyway, there cannot be divisions anymore; they cannot handle a separation of territories. I am not for unification of Albanian territories (#14, 05.05.2013).

Albanian should accept that unification is not possible, maybe my political party would not confirm my opinion if they listen to me now, but this is my personal opinion. We should move forward, they will continue to be Albanians, we will love them in the same way, we are the same, but is better to leave the things in their present place (#2, 23.04.2013).

On the other hand, two interviewees, part of the youth forum with nationalist ideology, strongly supported the territorial unification of ethnic Albanians, and three others stated that unification may happen in the future but they supported more a unification based on cooperation and collaboration.

... I am sure that there will be a big ethnic Albania one day. It will be the unification of Albania with Kosovo or let say Albania with Albania. Because Kosovo is Albania and the official flag should be the Albanian flag (#11, 20.03.2013).

It is difficult, very difficult, but it is not impossible. We hope for a future unification at least with Kosovo (#1, 13.02.2013).

Seven interviewees emphasized that cooperation and collaboration among ethnic Albanians is more important than territorial unification. Also, most of the interviewees mentioned EU integration as an important priority for Albanian state, and claimed that EU integration is more important than ethnic unification.

Ethnic Albania within the same borders I think is impossible. But the unification of a greater Albania or ethnic Albania through cooperation in different areas like economy, politics, education, culture and trade related to economy is possible. The unification of Albanians can be possible only if borders would not have the same importance that they have today (#12, 11.04.2013).

Well, on one side is the idea of unification of ethnic Albanians and on the other EU integration... Surely that Albania would not choose that kind of unification at the

expense of EU membership. I think that they would concentrate on EU membership that is what everyone wants (#6, 15.04.2013).

All the interviewees expressed that the unification of all Albanians in one state would be ideal, but most of them do not believe that it is possible. The interviewees from the three largest political parties were against territorial unification because they thought that it would bring instability in the region and have a negative impact on Albania's foreign policy priorities. Most of the interviewed youth, except those with nationalist ideology, believed in a future unification in the form of cooperation and collaboration among ethnic Albanians rather than territorial unification. The interviewed youth from the nationalist party's youth forum strongly supported territorial unification because the unification of ethnic Albanians and their protection is the main priority of their political party; these youth believe that all Albanians have the right to be united and that it will definitely happen one day.

After looking at youths' opinions on kin groups' conflicts, for a better understanding of their peacemaking and troublemaking potentials, it is important to look at these youths' opinions and evaluations on the kin state's role in these conflicts.

5.3. Youth's Understanding of Kin states' Role

5.3.1. Priorities

Almost all interviewees mentioned economic development as an important domestic priority of the Albanian state, and most of them listed it as the main priority. As mentioned by one of the interviewees *"The first and most important reason which is part of the programs of all the political parties is the economic improvement. Good economy can bring better standards and more possibilities for development as a state"* (#8, 18.03.2013).

Priorities of the Albanian state... the main priority of the Albanian state is to survive the country from the economic crisis and poverty (#14, 05.05.2013).

Concerning the foreign policy, most of the interviewed youth mentioned EU integration and good relations with neighbors as main foreign policy priorities of the

Albanian state. Within good neighborhood relations, interviewees included the relations with Serbia and Macedonia too.

I think that Albania has followed and continue to follow a policy aiming good neighborhood relations (#3, 27.04.2013).

The main priority is EU integration; this is the main issue, and improvement of the relations with some specific countries (#1, 13.02.2013).

The interviewees divided the priorities of the Albanian state into domestic and foreign policy priorities. They mentioned economic development as the main domestic priority and EU integration and good neighborhood relations as the main foreign policy priorities. Most of the interviewees opposing territorial unification believed that it would negatively affect the economy, Albania's EU integration process and its good neighborhood policies. On the other side some interviewees, despite their political ideologies, mentioned Albania's domestic instability and youth with nationalist ideology added Albania's foreign policy priorities as obstacles to Albania's support toward its kin groups. As the collected data show, none of the interviewees mentioned relations with kin groups as an important priority of the Albanian state. Youth with nationalist ideology criticized the foreign policy priorities of the Albanian state because they think that protection of ethnic Albanians should be one of the most important priorities of Albania.

5.3.2. Approach

Concerning the approach of the Albanian state toward its kin groups, some of the interviewees stated that the Albanian state cares more about Kosovo; some thought that Albanian state should do more concerning its kin groups; and some pointed out that the Albanian state focuses on cooperation for the resolution of the kin group's conflicts.

As mentioned by seven interviewees, the Albanian state has been and is dealing more with Kosovo conflict than ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia.

Yes I think it {Albanian state} is not interested enough on dealing with them (ethnic Albanians), it has more important issues in its agenda like the EU integration. But I think that Albanian state is dealing more with Kosovo than Albanians in Macedonia (#5, 13.03.2013).

Most of the interviewees stated that the Albanian state is not doing enough; it should do a lot more regarding the protection of ethnic Albanians.

Albania itself should ask for the protection of ethnic Albanians' rights in Macedonia. Even in Kosovo, even though Kosovo is a different case. I think that Albania is not doing enough and should do more for protecting Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia (#10, 05.03.2013).

According to more than half of the interviewees, the Albanian state focuses more on cooperation and keeping the balance in the region rather than coercion.

The fact is that at least during this 4 years is seen the tendency to keep the balance, to have relations based on cooperation to show that this is the chosen way (#9, 25.02.2013).

As I told it before only through communication and cooperation we can have progress (#8, 18.03.2013).

While most of the interviewed youth stated that the Albanian state is not doing enough for ethnic Albanians, interviewees with nationalist ideology claimed that the Albanian state is doing nothing at all. Youth with nationalist ideology mentioned that supporting ethnic Albanians regardless of the political price is the duty of the Albanian state, but they thought that the state is ignoring the problems of ethnic Albanians because it does not want to be involved in conflicts. On the other hand most of the interviewees, despite their political ideology, claimed that the Albanian state is taking some steps to contribute to the peaceful resolution of ethnic Albanians' conflicts by supporting cooperation and negotiation, but also stated that they should do more in this regard. So, while nationalist youths emphasized the need for supporting ethnic Albanians through any means, the rest of the interviewees, that did not have nationalist

ideology, stated that the Albanian state should do more regarding its support for the peaceful resolution of these conflicts by following the normative approach.

A majority of interviewees emphasized that the Albanian state is doing more for Kosovo because it is worth more to cooperate with Kosovo, since Albanians there comprise the majority and are leading a separate state with which it is easier to cooperate. On the other hand some of the interviewed youth claimed that Albanians in Macedonia need Albania more than Kosovo Albanians, and Albania should deal more with ethnic Albanians in Macedonia.

5.3.3. Capacity

Majority of the interviewees stated that Albania has the capacity to protect its kin groups, and among them five interviewees thought that the Albanian state was not doing enough, it should do more in this regard.

I think the Albanian state has a lot of capacity; the thing is that they should know how to use it. Listen, I think that America is a big factor. If you have the support of America you have a lot. We have the support of America and also the European Union. We are a country aspiring EU membership and we have interests in it as EU has interests in us (#7, 18.03.2012).

I think that it has {capacity}, and this role is increasing day by day, but still more should be done and I believe that more can be done, so that its capacity is moving with increasing steps but I hope that more will be done (#9, 25.03.2013).

On the other side, six interviewees mentioned that the Albanian state does not have the capacity and is not powerful enough to protect its kin ethnic groups, or does not want to be included in conflicts and disturb the peace and stability in the region.

One can be that Albania is not that big... it does not have enough capacity to help them {ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and in Macedonia}, like it would help them if it was a powerful state in the Balkans (#13, 21. 04.2013).

There are no barriers is just that the Albanian state is not paying attention, is ignoring the problems going on for ethnic Albanians outside Albania's borders, just not to be included in conflicts, or just to look or say to the world that we are not engaging in conflicts (#6, 15.04.2013).

Generally the interviewed youth from the opposition parties stated that Albania has capacity but is not doing enough for its kin groups, and that the current government has the main responsibility. Moreover, youth with nationalist ideology mentioned that Albania has capacity but does not want to be included in conflict. On the other hand, mainly interviewees from the governing party emphasized that the Albanian state cannot do enough for its kin groups, because it does not have the needed capacity to protect them. It is important to highlight that while pro-European interviewees, based on pro-European ideologies that suggest the employment of the normative approach in case of conflict, considered Albania's non-involvement in ethnic Albanians conflicts as positive, youth with nationalist ideology evaluated it as a weakness and failure of the Albanians to perform the duty of protecting its kin groups despite any price.

5.3.4. Contribution

Nine interviewees believed that Albania could contribute to the resolution of its kin groups' conflicts by asking for the protection of ethnic Albanians' rights, encouraging peace and stability, and keeping good relations with neighbors.

Albanian state can be a stabilization factor in these conflicts, it can encourage good understanding, cooperation, talks etc. (#1, 13.02.2013)

This is what should be done, discussion and reaching the agreements at the table and not to take the weapons and start a war. I think this is the capacity that Albania has and it is a big power. The last Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been active in this aspect in pushing for and supporting the agreements between the Serbians and Albanians (#7, 18.03.2013).

Playing the role of a balancing state for me is very important and crucial, because in case of bias on behalf of ethnic Albanians, conflict can be encouraged more,

so this balancing role is crucial for the resolution of the conflict and then on agreement issues (#9, 25.02.2013).

Four interviewees thought that the Albanian state cannot contribute to conflict resolution of its kin ethnic groups because it has a lot of internal problems.

As I previously mentioned, there is neglect, there has been neglect, and this continues concerning the conflicts of ethnic Albanians not only in Kosovo and Macedonia but everywhere. But Albanians in Macedonia should not think that we are neglecting only them, we do so because we have a lot of internal problems; we cannot protect them (#2, 23.04.2013).

I do not believe that it can have any important contribution, because Albania has a lot of internal problems. Since the state is not able to solve its domestic problems, I cannot think of it contributing in the resolution of the conflicts of Albanians in Kosovo and those in Macedonia. (#5, 13.03.2013)

Most of the interviewees believed that the Albanian state can contribute to resolution of ethnic Albanians' conflicts. While a majority of them supported contributions through peaceful means, youths with nationalist ideology supported protection and contribution through any possible means. Interviewed youth from the opposition parties mentioned domestic instability as an obstacle for Albania's contribution to the resolution of ethnic Albanians' conflicts.

5.4. Youth's Troublemaking and Peacemaking Capabilities

5.4.1. Youth with Vision of Peace

Majority of the interviewees emphasized that they supported 'peaceful' or 'non-violent' forms of engagement in politics.

And for sure I am supporting peaceful protest, but not every kind of protest; I am against the use of violence in these types of settings (#6, 15.04.2013).

In my opinion they {protests} are tools that democracy provides us in order to come against an issue or system or regime. As far as they are peaceful, for me it is ok. When they turn to violent activities that it is not ok for me, I am against them (#14, 05.05.2013).

More than half of the interviewed youth pointed out the contribution that the Albanian state can have in ethnic Albanians conflicts by highlighting that the Albanian state is following a normative approach towards kin groups' conflicts by concentrating more on cooperation rather than coercion while dealing with those conflicts. So these youths claim that the Albanian state is working through peaceful means, in cooperation with the international institutions and the host states, for the improvement of ethnic Albanians' rights and status and for these conflicts to come to an end. Most of the interviewees stated the Albanian state is following the right path, which is the normative one, toward its kin groups.

Albania can contribute {to a peaceful resolution of ethnic Albanians' conflict} but this need to be achieved through cooperation with these different states (Kosovo and Macedonia}. With Kosovo this seems easier but with Macedonia it seems difficult, because in Kosovo there is an Albanian state and agreements can be made easier (#12, 11.04.2013).

We support cooperation and discussion. It would be a good thing to achieve this and maybe the political factors, the Albanian and Macedonian representatives, should seat down and resolve the issue by tolerating the rights that each deserves; be it the Albanian minority or the Macedonian majority (#8, 18.03.2013).

In their interviews, thirteen youth expressed their opinions on Albanian youth's contribution to these conflicts and most of them focused on the need for peaceful cooperation, new ideas and common activities among ethnic Albanian youths.

Another way has been the increasing of cooperation among forums. Representatives of other forums come here and we go there. We discuss and learn about the problems of each other (#7, 18.03.2013).

They {Youth} can arrange protests or peaceful manifestations in different embassies or in Macedonian embassy in Albania to attract their attention concerning human rights issues or minority right issues in Macedonia for example (#6, 15.04.2013).

So, a great majority of interviewees believed that the Albanian state can play a positive role in ethnic Albanians' conflicts; one that involves dialogue, cooperation, collaboration and negotiations among different parties. Most of interviewees, except those with nationalist ideology, supported the cooperative approach of the Albanian state in these conflicts. Almost all interviewees stated that youth should be concentrated on peaceful cooperation and work on designing a positive and constructive role for themselves, which might contribute to the peaceful resolution of ethnic Albanians' conflicts.

5.4.2. Youths' Inclination toward Violence

Another important theme mentioned by two interviewees from the nationalist party, concerning youth's understanding of peace and conflict, was the need for using pressure sometimes as a strategy by the Albanian state for the protection of ethnic Albanians' rights.

If the first one, the coercive form, was used we would have achieved more, but Albania pretends that through cooperation everything can be achieved. Well, it can be achieved through cooperation but this also depends how you are asking these rights. Sometimes pressure is needed I think; it sometimes brings more success (#6, 15.04.2013)

Justifying violence is another important theme that appeared in the interviews. Almost all interviewees, even though they did not support violence they justified it in case of protection against aggression. In this regard they justified the actions of Ushtria Clirimtare Kosovare (Kosovo Liberation Army) shortly known as UCK, during the war by stating that they fought for protection and against aggression, but they did not had enough knowledge on NLA (National Liberation Army) that is the army of ethnic

Albanians in Macedonia. These data show that sometimes youth may justify violence depending on reasons leading to its usage,

Moreover it (UCK) was considered as illegal, but they fought to protect the interests of their nationals, so I justify their actions (#13, 21.04.2013).

The role of UCK during those years has been positive. There have been a lot of massacres to Kosovo people from Serbia. UCK is considered a hero for Kosovo (#11, 20.03.2013).

The collected data show some important common themes regarding youths' understanding of kin groups' conflicts, kin state's role, and their own role in these conflicts. On the other hand, concerning their understanding of kin groups' conflicts, some important differences appeared among youth with nationalist ideology and the rest that in this research were youth without nationalist ideology or youth that had ideologies other than the nationalist one. There are also some minor differences between youth from the parties in the opposition and youth from the governing party.

Most of the interviewed youth, especially those from the opposition parties, stated that youth do not have enough influence in Albanian politics. On the other hand, mainly interviewees from the governing party claimed that youth have some kind of influence in Albanian politics. The reason behind this difference, as stated by some interviewees, is based on the influence of their parties; the governing party has more influence, and consequently youth from this party's forum feel more influential than youth from the opposition parties.

Despite their political ideologies, almost all interviewees expressed their opinions that youth inclusion in Albanian politics should be increased. Even though they did not like the way that the Albanian politics function, interviewed youths were interested and wanted to contribute to a better Albania, especially by bringing change. Their aim for contribution and their interest in party politics and politics in general encouraged most of the interviewees to choose youth forums as the best space to start

realizing their goals. In order to understand youths' contribution concerning kin groups' conflicts, firstly, it is important to explore their understanding of these conflicts.

All the interviewed youth expressed their opinion that the Albanian state should do more regarding ethnic Albanians' conflicts. Some of the interviewees from opposition parties blamed the current government for not doing enough for ethnic Albanians, and those with nationalist ideology called it a weakness or failure of the Albanian state. Some other interviewees, supporting the normative approach, appreciated the non-involvement of the Albanian state through a nationalist approach in these conflicts.

Almost all the interviewees, despite their political ideologies, believed that ethnic Albanians were justified in their demands. Most of these interviewees claimed that the Albanian state should support ethnic Albanians and contribute to the resolution of these conflicts through peaceful means, not by following a nationalist approach that would bring more instability and violence. They emphasized the need for a positive contribution to peace and to the peaceful resolution of these conflicts that would benefit ethnic Albanians and the whole region.

On the other hand, youth with nationalist ideology used stronger expression like 'hate' against Albanians as a main cause for both conflicts by claiming the existence of an aggression against all Albanians and emphasizing the duty of the Albanian state to protect them. In contrast to the majority, they go further by adding that pressure should be employed as a strategy when needed and is the duty of the Albanian state to protect its ethnic kin despite any cost.

The majority of the interviewees considered the supporters of ethnic Albanians, such as the EU and US, as actors aiming for peace and stability; and the supporters of Serbia and Macedonia, such as Russia and Serbia, as aggressors. Mainly youth with nationalist ideology defined the supportive relations among Russia, Serbia and Macedonia based on their common ethnic identity, and named it as a threat to Albanian ethnic identity. Similarly most of the interviewees mentioned Albania as an important supporter of ethnic Albanians, mainly because of their common ethnic identity. From this research we can see that the majority of the interviewees considered these conflicts

as ethnic conflicts, but youth with nationalist ideology go further by emphasizing that they were part of a bigger conflict, with ethnic Slavs targeting ethnic Albanians.

Almost all interviewees stated that these conflicts cannot be totally resolved, since identity conflicts are one of the most difficult types of conflicts. A majority of the interviewed youths expressed their opinion that these conflicts will continue for much longer, at least in people's minds, until the people accept the reality.

A majority of the interviewed youth, even though with different political ideologies, justified the usage of violence in case of protection against aggression and in this regard they justified the actions of UCK. Even though they did not support aggression and violence, these youth justified it when used as the last resort against aggression.

Differences in political ideologies brought different opinions regarding the idea of a greater ethnic Albania. A majority of the interviewees supported cooperation and collaboration among ethnic Albanians but not territorial unification; in their opinions it would bring instability to the region and problems to Albania's domestic and foreign policy priorities. On the other hand, youth with nationalist ideology strongly supported territorial unification. They thought that the priorities of the Albanian state are an obstacle to unification and they defended the idea that territorial unification of ethnic Albanians should be the primary goal of the Albanian state.

As a result, we see that political ideology may influence youths' understanding of peace and conflict. While interviewed youth with nationalist ideology supported the nationalist approach toward kin groups' conflicts, youths without nationalist ideology supported the peaceful and normative approach more strongly.

CHAPTER VI | CONCLUSION

This study focused on exploring the kin state youths' understanding of their kin groups' conflicts in order to learn their approaches towards peace and conflict. The main focus of this research was on youths' engagement in different political parties' youth forums with different political ideologies, aiming to understand the motives behind their party membership; their understanding of kin groups' conflicts; their opinions on the role of Albania as a kin state; and their own roles as troublemakers or peacemakers. In order to understand the role of party membership and political ideologies on youths' understanding, youth from four different political parties' youth forums and a control group of independent youths were interviewed.

Throughout this chapter, with the purpose of finding an answer to the research question, the data presented above are discussed. This chapter aims to derive meaning from the overall findings. In each part the collected data are summarized and discussed. Limitations and implications of this study, followed by some suggestions for future research conclude this chapter.

6.1. Discussion on Findings

6.1.1. Youth and Party Membership

The motives behind youths' membership in political parties can be summarized in four main themes: contribution to party and politics, bringing change, high influence of youth forums, and youths' interest for experience in politics. Youth under study emphasized the contribution to politics as their most important motive for engagement in political parties and considered youth forums as the most suitable space to realize their goals. Likewise the existing literature suggests that youth engage in institutional

politics to increase their participation and contribution to politics (Chisholm & Kovacheva 2002). Also according to the literature, people join political parties because they are attracted and motivated by the fact that parties offer more possibilities and influence to their members relative to non members (Hofmeister & Grabow, 2011; Heidar, 2006). Moreover, youths' aim for contribution to their respective parties is also consistent with the literature which states that the role of youth within political parties, even though not celebrated, has always been very important (Kanyadudi, 2010). People's interest in politics, solidarity and socialization are mentioned in the literature among the other motives for party membership (Scarrow, 2005; Heidar, 2006; Young and Cross, 2002).

According to the scholars of political behavior, engagement in politics, such as through political party membership, is one way of bringing change (Adamski, 1988; MacKinnon, Pitre, Watling, 2007; Sherrod, 2006). This statement of the literature is supported by the current research that points to interviewees' aims to contribute to politics mainly by bringing change; by bringing a new political culture that would contribute to a better Albania.

The literature suggests that youth are mostly used by their parties; decision making is considered as a structure for adults; and youth are considered as incapable of being included in the decision making process (Uprichard 2008; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005; Neyzi, 2001). Similarly in this study, while expressing their interests and motives for engagement in politics, most of the interviewees claimed that in Albania, youths are mostly used by their parties, mainly for campaigns or different activities, but not enough space is provided to them in the decision making process. Moreover, interviewees emphasized that the role of youth in Albanian politics is minimized because the leaders are the ones that make all the major decisions. The outcome of this research proved the statement of Kanyadudi who claimed that the intent of older cadres and elites to leave youth in the periphery leads to non-celebration of youth capacities (2010:15). Additionally, according to the interviewed youth, the exclusion of youth from politics means ignoring their capacities, opinions, and contribution to all spheres of life and politics.

The collected data show that even though there is not enough space in politics for youth, they try to find spaces like youth forums with the highest influence to increase their contribution. This finding challenges the literature which suggests that “youth are not able to take visible strategic positions and highlight their own contributions” (Kanyadudi, 2010: 15). Interviewed youth considered youth forums as a place where they can raise their voice, and where their voice can be heard more than in any other place. This supports the existing literature stating that youth leagues, based on their hierarchical position in the party, have higher chances for positive contribution and influence to their parties and countries (Chisholm and Kovacheva, 2002; Kanyadudi, 2010).

This research revealed that politically engaged youth, despite their political ideologies, engaged in party politics to contribute to a better Albania by bringing change; bringing a different political culture based on clear and idealized aims and policies. They have chosen youth forums as the most influential form of engagement in order to realize their goals, to influence and contribute to Albanian politics. They expressed their disappointment of the current functioning of Albanian politics, but highlighted their interest in it, and emphasized the need and importance for increasing youth inclusion in Albanian politics.

6.1.2. Youth’s Understanding of Kin groups’ Conflicts

In Albania youth comprise a high portion of the population, and they have the potential to influence the state’s policies, in this case the policies towards their kin groups’ conflicts. Through their party membership youth aim to contribute, and their contribution towards kin groups’ conflicts can be influenced or shaped by their understanding of these conflicts. My interview questions were structured to understand youth’s approach to ethnic Albanians’ conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia by looking at how they see causes, parties, and the current situation of these conflicts.

Interviewees, parallel to the existing literature, mentioned history, injustice, aggression and territory as the main common causes of ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia. Most of the interviewees mentioned that while Albanians in

Kosovo were asking for independence, Albanians in Macedonia were asking for their rights to be guaranteed and the discrimination to come to an end. This research showed that interviewees identified the aggression, discrimination, and nationalism of Serbs and Macedonians as the main causes of the conflicts. So, despite their political ideologies, interviewees were of the same opinion regarding the causes of ethnic Albanians' conflicts and most of their opinions were in conformity with the existing literature which lists territorial division of 1913, aggression and discrimination among main factors leading to conflict. They considered these as justified demands of ethnic Albanians and claimed that the main problems came from either Serbs or Macedonians. Here youths' opinions of 'us' vs. 'others' and a kind of 'enemy image' against Serbs or Macedonians can be observed since they are mainly named as aggressors.

The interviewees defined the current situation of ethnic Albanians' conflicts as ongoing, claiming that even though tensions may be reduced the conflicts continue. According to most of the interviewed youth, ethnic Albanians' conflicts are based on identity, and similarly with the literature on identity based conflicts they stated that ending identity conflicts is very difficult because people need time to accept the reality that challenges their identities. The findings of this research showed that youth believe that ethnic Albanians' conflicts will continue for some more time, not as violent conflicts, but mainly as psychological ones.

6.1.3. Youth's Understanding of Kin state's approach

In this research, youths are considered as actors within the kin state, and the way they evaluate the kin state's approach toward its kin groups' conflicts shows their understanding of these conflicts and their inclination towards peace or conflict. Albanian interviewees mentioned the EU and US as international actors and Albania, which is the kin state, as important external parties in ethnic Albanians' conflicts. Their understanding fits in the recent literature that includes kin-state as an important external actor in ethnic conflicts (Brubaker, 1995:1996; Austvoll, 2006; Koinova, 2008; Saideman, 2001; 2002; Sabanadze, 2006; Huibregtse, 2011 etc). Moreover, the literature presents the idea that the kin state can use and support its kin minorities because of kinship and geopolitical interests (Austvoll, 2005; Sabanadze, 2006). Likewise, according to the interviewees with different political ideologies, the inclusion

of the Albanian state and its support for ethnic Albanians is based on kinship relations and its interests.

According to the literature “a state may intervene to detach territory populated by its kin from another state, to help them become independent or to end their suffering and improve their status within the other state.” (Huibregtse, 2011: 46). Similarly, from the literature it can be expected for the Albanian state to support Kosovo to become an independent state and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia to improve their status within Macedonia. However the political ideology of youth matters when they evaluate the approaches of the kin state towards kin groups’ conflicts, and from this evaluation youths’ own approach towards kin groups’ conflicts can be revealed.

Even though the majority of the interviewees stated that the Albanian state cares more about Kosovo, almost all of them emphasized that in general the Albanian state is not doing enough concerning its kin groups’ conflicts. Scholars identify the kin state’s strength as an important variable for its intervention in ethnic conflicts abroad. Ganguli argues that a kin state may not act toward its ethnic kin because it does not have the capacities, capabilities or is not in its interests to do so (Ganguli, 1998: 11–31 as mentioned in Koinova, 2008: 374). While most of the interviewees from the opposition parties blamed the current government for not doing enough for ethnic Albanians, mainly the nationalist ones called it a failure of the Albanian state to protect its ethnic kin. Youth from the governing party, on the other hand, stated that the Albanian state is not powerful enough to protect its ethnic groups through nationalist means.

The interviewees criticized that the Albanian state cares more about Kosovo, but it can be justified by their explanations that in Kosovo Albanians comprise the majority, they had more opportunities to be successful, and now they have an Albanian leadership with which it is easier to cooperate. These opinions fit in the literature which suggests that a kin state should take into consideration whether the kin group is large enough and worth fighting for (Huibregtse, 2011). According to the majority of the interviewees, despite their political ideologies, Kosovo Albanians relative to ethnic Albanians in Macedonia have more characteristics, like they are in majority, have Albanian leadership, conflict has been more severe and have more opportunities for success, that make them worth fighting for.

Moreover, from the collected data we can see that most of the interviewed youth had more knowledge on Kosovo rather than the Macedonian conflict, and that some of them did not have information at all on the Macedonian conflict. Also, the severity of the Kosovo conflict has attracted more attention and provided more information on this conflict relative to ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia. So, the severity of the conflict appeared as a motive which is absent in the literature, that can encourage the kin state to intervene in its kin groups' conflict. On the other hand, some interviewees stated that even though kin groups in majority may be more attractive for the kin state, kin groups in minority need its help more because they are less powerful to determine their own fate.

The literature focuses on the absence of the kin state's capabilities to protect its kin groups, and ignores the positive side of the kin state's inaction towards kin groups' conflicts. Youth with nationalist ideology criticized the Albanian state's inaction to protect its ethnic kin as suggested by their nationalist agenda.²⁵ These youth supported the nationalist approach which suggests that the kin state should include in its agenda the protection of ethnic groups through any means. On the other hand most of the interviewees were against the nationalist approach towards kin groups' conflicts, showing their support for Albanian state's cooperative or normative approach towards these conflicts' resolution. They supported the idea that Albanian state should work on promoting ethnic Albanians' rights not by using violence or pressure but through cooperation with the host states and international bodies. Similarly the literature suggests that according to the normative approach "states pursue policies aimed at promoting the rights of their kin minorities in home-states either in co-operation with respective governments or via international institutions" (Sabanadze, 2006: 250). The data show that youth without nationalist ideology support the normative approach, based on cooperation and collaboration not violence, which show these youths' peacemaking potentials.

²⁵The Program of Red-Black Alliance Party. Red-Black Alliance Party's Website. Retrieved July 1, 2013 from <http://www.aleancakuqezhi.al/programi/>

So, the majority of the interviewed youth emphasized the need for more contribution by the Albanian state to the resolution of its kin groups' conflicts through normative and cooperative approaches. On the other hand, youth with nationalist ideology claimed that the Albanian state should employ any means to protect ethnic Albanians by supporting the nationalist approach towards kin group's conflicts.

6.1.4. Youth's Troublemaking and Peacemaking Capabilities

According to the literature youths as trouble makers are presented as agents of conflict and negative change, and youth as peace makers are presented as agents of peace during and after the conflict (McEvoy-Levy, 2006). The goal of youth in this research through party membership is to bring change, but whether this change will be positive or negative is debatable and depends on youths' understanding of peace and conflict. This research identified that the inclusion of youth in politics may be a positive contribution to politics and peace depending on how they see the role of their state in conflicts concerning their kins. Moreover, this study suggests that political ideologies, especially nationalist ideology, can push youth towards opinions, attitudes and behaviors that would disturb the peace and stability (Todosiyevic, 2004).

Scholars argue that whether youth will contribute to peace or conflict depends on the direction of their political activism and the tools they use for participation. Most of the interviewees supported peaceful tools of participation and they were against the use of violence, which showed their inclination towards peace. Moreover, most of the interviewees chosen for this research claimed that they became part of youth forums in order to realize their aims and bring change, and in the same way the literature suggests that organizations led by youth, either NGOs or youth wings, can be considered as important spaces that can lead to positive change by empowering youth and giving them space for positive action and change (Drummond-Mundal & Cave, 2007).

Similarly, based on the literature which suggests that young people can be peace builders by spreading the values of peace and democracy with their activism in local, national or international youth organizations, we can derive that youth with an understanding of conflict from a non-nationalist perspective can contribute to peace and stability by bringing positive change.

In this respect, the claim by the nationalist youth on unification of ethnic Albanians under the historical “Greater Albania” can be taken as their inclination towards conflict rather than peace. Youth with nationalist ideology in this study, based on the statute and ideology of their party, emphasized the need for territorial unification at any cost. They claimed that the Albanian state should do more in this regard even though they were aware that it would bring problems and instability in the region. These findings support Pratley’s (2011) statement that “political grievances founded on political ideology and identity politics do not in themselves cause conflict, but can provide powerful discourses for mobilizing youth towards perpetuating violence” (Pratley, 2011:38). So, these youth driven by their nationalist ideology supported the nationalist approach and even the use of pressure and violence if needed. The inclusion in politics of these youth, aiming to follow the nationalist approach, would be risky since it can fuel the conflict rather than solve it through peaceful methods (Todosiyevic, 2004; Sotiropoulou, 2004).

In addition, most of the interviewees justified the actions of UCK in Kosovo by stating that it was their right to protect their country and citizens against aggression though any means; they cited the UCK’s actions as honorable. This justification is strongly related to the beliefs of the interviewees that Albanians are treated unjustly, have been discriminated and targeted by Serbians and Macedonians historically. This finding fits within the literature which states that “propaganda and a history of victimization instill a sense of humiliation among youth and they start to believe that revenge is the solution and turn to people that can help them with violent sources” (Mercy Corps, 2010: 11). The data imply that interviewed youth can justify violence based on observation of victimization, humiliation and aggression against ethnic Albanians in these conflicts.

Most of the interviewees except the nationalist ones, driven by their patriotic feelings, highlighted the need for cooperation and collaboration among Albanians, and opposed territorial unification since it would disturb the regional balance. If these patriotic youth are included or can influence politics, they would support and contribute to the normative or cooperative approach of the Albanian state toward its kin groups’ conflicts. So, differentiating among youth with nationalist ideology and patriots is an

important task. As observed in this research, the interviewed youth with nationalist ideology can resort most easily to violence and those motivated by patriotism mainly support peaceful and cooperative approaches regarding their kin groups' conflict resolution.

The profile of the interviewees showed that a majority of the interviewees engaged in political parties had the position of youth coordinator within the forum, and most of them do not have any important say within the party. This research noticed the need for an increase in youth's inclusion in politics, but pointed out that their influence on the kin state's approach depends on their understanding of peace and conflict. The findings of this research suggested that youths' understanding of kin groups' conflict and their approaches toward these conflicts are mainly shaped by certain political ideologies. In this current study the main difference is observed among the understanding of youths with nationalist ideology and those without nationalist ideology. The literature suggests three main approaches that states may pursue towards kin groups including the nationalist, geopolitical and normative approach. The data of this thesis showed that youth with nationalist ideology support the nationalist approach and those without nationalist ideology support the cooperative or normative approach towards kin groups' conflicts. So, youth without nationalist ideology, youth with a vision of peace and supporters of the normative approach can bring positive contributions and change. By empowering these youth for positive action and change it would provide more chances to them to increase their contribution to the peaceful resolution of their kin groups' conflicts. Hence, only youth without nationalist ideology which are supporters of the normative approach towards kin groups' conflicts may have a positive contribution to the peaceful resolution of ethnic Albanians' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia.

6.2. Conclusion

This thesis intends to explore youths' understanding of peace and conflict. Aiming to answer the research question "How do kin state's youths understand their kin groups' conflicts?", I explored the understanding of youths in Albania on their kin groups' conflicts in Kosovo and in Macedonia through the interviewees that I conducted with youth members of four different political parties' youth forums .

The findings of this research demonstrated that young people through their party membership aim to contribute to politics and peace by bringing change. Whether their contribution will be positive or negative depends on their understanding or opinions. This research showed that political ideology can play an important role in youth's understanding of their kin groups' conflicts. The need for differentiating among youth with and without nationalist ideology is demonstrated by this study. It was observed that while youth with nationalist ideology supported the nationalist approach towards kin groups' conflict, youth without nationalist ideology supported the cooperative, peaceful or normative approach towards kin groups' conflicts. The interviewees supporting the normative approach emphasized the need for "promoting the rights of their kin minorities in home-states either in co-operation with respective governments or via international institutions" (Sabanadze, 2006: 250). On the other side youths supporting the nationalist approach claimed their aim to "incorporate support of kin-minorities abroad into their national and nation-building agendas by pursuing policies that are influenced as much by issues of kin-minorities as by internal political considerations" and for them protection of kin groups is an important priority that should be followed with any price (Sabanadze, 2006: 248).

In addition, the outcome of this study showed that an increase in youth's inclusion in politics might provide the potential for more peaceful approach, in Albanian state's role in its kin's conflicts elsewhere. Whether the Albanian youth would bring a positive or negative contribution to kin groups' conflicts depends on their political ideologies. Moreover, youths with a vision of peace are very important for a sustainable peace and for a positive contribution to kin groups' conflicts resolution.

6.3. Limitations of the Research

The present research is subject to some methodological limitations that might influence its reliability and validity.

Firstly, the literature on research methodology suggests that "qualitative research is an interpretative and subjective exercise, and the researcher is intimately involved in

the process.” (Pope & Mays in Lacey & Luff, 2007: 6). Therefore the findings of this research are not value free and appropriate for generalizations.

Secondly, in this research non random, snowball sampling was employed, meaning that the sample lacks representativeness. The interviewed youths were reached through the personal contacts of the researcher and interviewees, and this shows the possibility that youth with similar ideas or opinions were included in the sample of this study. As a result, the collected data is valid only for a limited sample among politically engaged youths in Albania.

Thirdly, most of the political youth forums do not provide information or any list of their members, which makes the selection of the interviewees difficult by limiting the pool for the selection of the interviewees. This also constrains the representativeness and validity of the research.

Moreover, the profile of the interviewees contains another limitation. The interviewees in this research were all university educated youth, so none of them lacked university education. Hence, the sample is not appropriate to make generalizations on the opinions of youth with party membership since the understanding of youth with party membership but without university education is not explored.

6.4. Implications of the Research

6.4.2. Theoretical Implications

Youth participation has been subject to research in different branches of social sciences focusing mainly on youth movements, civic engagement, etc. Also, reports on the role of youth in different countries have been published by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Some of these studies have been focused on youths’ engagement in party politics. Moreover, recently the literature on the role of youth in peace and conflict has started to be widely researched, especially in the conflict resolution field. However, none of the previous studies explored the understanding of youth, as actors within the kin state, concerning their kin groups’ conflicts. So, considering the kin group-kin state relationship, this research is important because it

sheds light on youth as actors that can influence kin state's approach towards its kin groups. Overall, this research is very important because it presents political ideology as an important factor that may influence youths' understanding of peace and conflict.

Moreover, the focus of this research on youths' political forums comprises another important implication of this study. The literature on youths in political forums is very limited and in Albania there are no studies at all on this subject. Therefore, this study enriches the literature by providing research on an understudied population.

6.4.3. Practical Implications

Exploring the understanding of the youth in the kin state concerning their kin groups' conflicts has important practical implications too. It revealed some important factors that may shape youths' understanding and consequently their approaches and contributions to these conflicts. For example most of the interviewees emphasized their support for a cooperative approach towards kin groups' conflict. Therefore this study suggests to the governments to benefit from and promote the potential of youth, by increasing their inclusion in decision making, by encouraging their engagement in politics, and their contribution to the peaceful resolution of kin groups' conflicts.

Secondly, the existence of a relationship between political ideology and youths' understanding of conflicts was highlighted. In this regard, this research increases the awareness that inclusion of youth with a vision of peace in politics would have a positive contribution to ethnic Albanians' conflicts, and on the other side the inclusion of youth with nationalist ideology may have a negative effect on the resolution of these conflicts.

Also from this study important policy implications can be derived. For example, most of the interviewed youth expressed their disappointment concerning the space offered to them in politics. This suggests that policy makers should take into consideration youths' interests in politics and their desire for contribution and design inclusive policies, especially for youths with a vision of peace.

Is important to note that that even though it has significant theoretical, practical and policy contributions, the findings of this research are valid only for the sample under study and generalization on all youths that are members of political parties' youth forums in Albania cannot be achieved.

6.5. Future Research

The sample of this study does not include youths with party membership but without university education. Hence, the exploration of the understanding of these youth may contribute to enrich and broaden the literature on youths' understanding of kin groups' conflicts. Moreover quantitative studies that include the understanding of youths with and without university education would provide more insight on the topic under research.

Also, while this study showed that political ideology influences youth understanding of peace and conflict further research can be done to explore and compare the understanding of youth with and without party membership, which would show more representativeness of the understanding of youths in the kin states.

Furthermore, this research presented the need for increasing the inclusion of youths with a vision of peace in politics, and an exploration of the understanding of youths included in politics and their initiatives for contribution can be done in order to understand whether more inclusion really means more contribution to peace.

Finally, an important future study can concentrate on exploring youth's contribution to the resolution of kin groups' conflicts. This would reveal an important contribution to the literature of youths as peacemakers and trouble makers.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A.1. Guide for the Interviews with Politically Engaged Youth

A.1.1. English Version

Part 1

Youth and their engagement in party politics

1. What encouraged or motivated you to engage in politics?
2. What are your goals and expectations from political engagement?
3. How do you expect to contribute to the Albanian politics?
4. Are you member of any NGO in Albania, have you ever been?
 - 4.1. If yes: How can you compare NGOs and political youth forums roles in Albania?
 - 4.2. If no: Why did you prefer the membership in youth forums over NGO membership?
5. How active and influential do you think are youth forums in Albanian politics?
Why?
6. What do you do inside the forum, what is your duty?
7. Except you activism within your political party are there other means you participate in politics like demonstrations etc? If yes please tell me about that? If not what do you think about these types of engagement?
8. What are and in your opinion should be the main priorities of the Albanian state concerning its domestic policies? ...foreign policies?

Part 2

Youth's opinions on Kin-minorities conflicts (Ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia and Kosovo conflict)

9. According to you what are the roots of ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia?

10. In your opinion what are the main parties involved in ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia, what do the parties want, and what strategies do they use during the conflict?
11. How can you explain the current situation of ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia?
12. What should be done for the resolution of this conflict, how?
13. What are the roots of Kosovo conflict?
14. What are the main parties involved in Kosovo conflict, their aims and strategies used during the conflict?
15. How can you explain the current situation in Kosovo? Why is this conflict continuing in a post-conflict phase?
16. What is your opinion on the way that NLA (National Liberation Army) in Macedonia and UÇK in Kosovo dealt with the conflict? Are they successful? Why? Why not?
17. What is your opinion on the unification of ethnic Albanians, is it possible and how?
18. What is your opinion on the Albanian state's capacity to protect its kin-minorities?
19. What are possible weakness and/or barriers for it to be a strong actor in these conflicts?
20. How can Albanian state contribute in the resolution of the conflicts its kin-minorities are experiencing?
21. Besides the ethnic motives in Kosovo and Macedonia, do they have geopolitical importance for Albania? Why? Why not? (If not mentioned before)

Part 3

Youth opinions on Albanian state - kin minority relationship

22. What approach do you think is the Albanian state pursuing toward its kin-minority in Kosovo? ...In Macedonia? Do you support these policies? Why/Why not?
23. Is Albanian state focusing on coercive or cooperative forms of conflict resolution, why? (if not answered in question 17)
24. In your opinion, what are some domestic factors that influence Albanian state's approaches toward its kin- minorities?
25. Do you think the Albanian people support Albanian state's policies in Kosovo and Macedonia? Why? Why not? (if not mentioned in question 20)

26. How does Albanian-USA relationship affect Albanian's foreign policy and its approach toward its kin minorities? (if USA mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
27. How does Albania's EU integration process influences Albania's foreign policy toward its kin-minorities? (if EU mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
28. What is your opinion on human rights protection in Albania?
29. How does human rights protection affect Albanian state's approach toward the resolution of its kin-minorities' conflicts?
30. How do you evaluate the policies of Albanian state toward its kin-minorities in general and what should be done in the future?
31. How can youths in Albania contribute in shaping state's policy toward its kin-minorities?

A.1.2. Albanian Version

Pjesa 1-re

Te rinjte dhe angazhimi ne politike

1. Cfare ju inkurajoi ose motivi qe te merrni pjese ne politike?
2. Cilat jane qellimet dhe pritshmerite tuaja nga angazhimi juaj ne politike?
3. Si prisni te kontribuoni ne politiken shqiptare?
4. A jeni anetar i ndonje OJQ-je ne Shqiperi ose a keni qene?
 - 4.1. Nese po: Si mund ta krahasoni rolin e OJQ-ve dhe forumeve politike ne Shqiperi?
 - 4.2. Nese jo: Pse preferuat antaresimin ne forumet politike mbi OJQ-te?
5. Sa aktive dhe me influence jane forumet rinore ne politiken Shqiptare sipas mendimit tuaj? Pse?
6. Cilat jane detyrat ose pozicioni juaj ne forum?
7. Pervec aktivizimit ne partite politike, a ka menyra te tjera me te cilat ju angazhoheni ne politike si pershembull demonstratat etj? Nese po ju lutem me tregoni per te? Nese jo cfare mendimi keni mbi keto menyra te tjera pjsemarrjeje ne politike?
8. Sipas mendimit tuaj cilat jane dhe cilat duhet te jene prioritetet e shtetit Shqiptar ne politiken e brendeshme? Te jashtme?

Pjesa 2-te

Opinionet e te rinjve mbi konfliktet e grupeve farefisnore (Konflikti e Shqiptareve etnike ne Maqedoni dhe ne Kosove)

9. Sipas jush cilat jane shkaqet e konfliktit te shqipatareve ne Maqedoni?
10. Cilet jane aktoret kryesore ne kete konflikt, cilat jane kerkesat e tyre dhe strategjiite qe ata perdorin?
11. Si e shpjegoni situaten aktuale te konfliktit te shqipetareve etnike ne Maqedoni?
12. Cfare duhet bere per zgjidhjen e ketij konflikti dhe si?
13. Cilat jane shkaqet e konfliktit te Kosoves?
14. Cilat jane partite kryesore ne kete konflikt, qellimet e tyre dhe strategjiite e perdorura gjate konfliktit?
15. Si e shpjegoni situaten aktuale ne Kosove? Sipas mendimit tuaj pse ky konflikt po vazhdon edhe ne fazen e post-konfliktit?
16. Cili eshte opinion juaj lidhur me menyren qe NLA (National Liberation Army) ne Macedonia dhe UÇK ne Kosovo jane marre me konfliktin? A jane te suksesshem? Pse? Pse jo?
17. Cfare mendimi keni ne lidhje krijimin e nje shqiperie etnike, a eshte e mundur dhe si?
18. Cili eshte opinion juaj ne lidhje me kapacitetin e shtetit Shqiptar per te mbrojtur shqiptartet ne trevat jashte shiperise?
19. Cilat jane dobesite ose pengesat per Shiperine qe te jete nje aktor I rendesishem ne keto konflikte?
20. Si mund te kontribuojte shteti Shqiptar ne zgjidhjen e ketyre konflikteve?
21. Pervec motiveve lidhur me etnicitetin ne Kosove dhe Maqedoni, a jane keto treva me rendesi gjeopolitike per Shqiperine? Pse? Pse jo? (If not mentioned before)

Pjesa 3-te

Opinionet e te rinjve mbi mardhenien e shtetit Shqiptar me grupet farefisnore

22. Cfare qasjeje po ndjek shteti Shqiptar drejt shqipetareve te Kosoves? ...Maqedonise? A I mbeshtesni politikate e tij? Pse, Pse jo?
23. Shteti Shqiptar eshte I fokusuar ne format coercive apo bashkepunuese te zgjidhjes se konfliktit, pse? (if not answered in question 17)
24. Sipas mendimit tuaj cilet jane faktoret e brendshem qe influencojne qasjen e shtetit Shqiptar drejt grupeve farefisore?

25. A mendoni se populli shqiptar i mbeshtet politikat e shtetit shqiptar ne Kosove dhe Maqedoni? Pse? Pse jo? (if not mentioned in question 20)
26. Si e ndikojne maredheniet Shqiperi- SHBA politiken e jashtme te Shqiperise dhe qasjen e saj ndaj grupeve farefisnore? (if USA mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
27. Cfare ndikimi ka procesi i integritimit ne BE ne politiken e jashtme te Shqiperise drejt grupeve farefisnore? (if EU mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
28. Cfare opinion keni mbi mbrojtjen e te drejtave te njeriut ne Shqiperi?
29. Si e ndikon mbrojtja e te drejtave te njeriut qasjen e shtetit Shqiptar ndaj zgjidhjes se konflikteve te grupeve te tij farefisnore?
30. Si I vleresoni politikat e shtetit Shqiptar ne lidhje me grupet farefisnore dhe cfare duhet te behet ne te ardhmen sipas mendimit tuaj?
31. Si mund te kontribuojne te rinjte ne Shqiperi ne formimin e politikave te shtetit Shqiptar drejt grupeve farefisnore?

A.2. Guide for the Interviews with Independent Youth

A.2.1. English Version

Part 1

Youth and their non engagement in party politics

1. Why did you prefer not to engage in politics?
2. Are you member of any NGO in Albania, have you ever been?
 - 2.1. If yes: How can you compare NGOs and political youth forums roles in Albania?
 - 2.2. If no: Why did you prefer the membership in youth forums over NGO membership?
3. How active and influential do you think are youth forums in Albanian politics? Why?
4. What do you do inside the forum, what is your duty?
5. Except you activism within your political party are there other means you participate in politics like demonstrations etc? If yes please tell me about that? If not what do you think about these types of engagement?

6. What are and in your opinion should be the main priorities of the Albanian state concerning its domestic policies? ...foreign policies?

Part 2

Youth's opinions on Kin-minorities conflicts (Ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia and Kosovo conflict)

7. According to you what are the roots of ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia?

8. In your opinion what are the main parties involved in ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia, what do the parties want, and what strategies do they use during the conflict?

9. How can you explain the current situation of ethnic Albanians' conflict in Macedonia?

10. What should be done for the resolution of this conflict, how?

11. What are the roots of Kosovo conflict?

12. What are the main parties involved in Kosovo conflict, their aims and strategies used during the conflict?

13. How can you explain the current situation in Kosovo? Why is this conflict continuing in a post-conflict phase?

14. What is your opinion on the way that NLA (National Liberation Army) in Macedonia and UÇK in Kosovo dealt with the conflict? Are they successful? Why? Why not?

15. What is your opinion on the unification of ethnic Albanians, is it possible and how?

16. What is your opinion on the Albanian state's capacity to protect its kin-minorities?

17. What are possible weakness and/or barriers for it to be a strong actor in these conflicts?

18. How can Albanian state contribute in the resolution of the conflicts its kin-minorities are experiencing?

19. Besides the ethnic motives in Kosovo and Macedonia, do they have geopolitical importance for Albania? Why? Why not? (If not mentioned before)

Part 3

Youth opinions on Albanian state - kin minority relationship

20. What approach do you think is the Albanian state pursuing toward its kin-minority in Kosovo? ...In Macedonia? Do you support these policies? Why/Why not?
21. Is Albanian state focusing on coercive or cooperative forms of conflict resolution, why? (if not answered in question 17)
22. In your opinion, what are some domestic factors that influence Albanian state's approaches toward its kin- minorities?
23. Do you think the Albanian people support Albanian state's policies in Kosovo and Macedonia? Why? Why not? (if not mentioned in question 20)
24. How does Albanian-USA relationship affect Albanian's foreign policy and its approach toward its kin minorities? (if USA mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
25. How does Albania's EU integration process influences Albania's foreign policy toward its kin-minorities? (if EU mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
26. What is your opinion on human rights protection in Albania?
27. How does human rights protection affect Albanian state's approach toward the resolution of its kin-minorities' conflicts?
28. How do you evaluate the policies of Albanian state toward its kin-minorities in general and what should be done in the future?
29. How can youths in Albania contribute in shaping state's policy toward its kin-minorities?

A.2.2. Albanian Version

Pjesa 1-re

Te rinjte dhe mos angazhimi ne politike

1. Pse keni preferuar te mos angazhoheni ne politike?
2. A jeni anetar i ndonje OJQ-je ne Shqiperi ose a keni qene?
 - 2.1. Nese po: Si mund ta krahasoni rolin e OJQ-ve dhe forumeve politike ne Shqiperi?
 - 2.2. Nese jo: Pse preferuat antaresimin ne forumet politike mbi OJQ-te?
3. Sa aktive dhe me influence jane forumet rinore ne politiken Shqiptare sipas mendimit tuaj? Pse?
4. Cilat jane detyrat ose pozicioni juaj ne forum?

5. Përveç aktivizimit në partitë politike, a ka mënyra të tjera më të cilat ju angazhoheni në politike si përshembull demonstratat etj? Nëse po ju lutem më tregoni për të? Nëse jo çfarë mendimi keni mbi këto mënyra të tjera pjesëmarrjeje në politike?

6. Sipas mendimit tuaj cilat janë dhe cilat duhet të jenë prioritetet e shtetit Shqiptar në politiken e brendshme? Të jashtme?

Pjesa 2-te

Opinionet e të rinjve mbi konfliktet e grupeve farefisnore (Konflikti e Shqiptareve etnike në Maqedoni dhe në Kosovë)

7. Sipas jush cilat janë shkaqet e konfliktit të shqiptareve në Maqedoni?

8. Cilët janë aktoret kryesore në këtë konflikt, cilat janë kërkesat e tyre dhe strategjitë që ata përdorin?

9. Si e shpjegoni situatën aktuale të konfliktit të shqiptareve etnike në Maqedoni?

10. Çfarë duhet bërë për zgjidhjen e këtij konflikti dhe si?

11. Cilat janë shkaqet e konfliktit të Kosovës?

12. Cilat janë partitë kryesore në këtë konflikt, qëllimet e tyre dhe strategjitë e përdorura gjatë konfliktit?

13. Si e shpjegoni situatën aktuale në Kosovë? Sipas mendimit tuaj pse ky konflikt po vazhdon edhe në fazën e post-konfliktit?

14. Cili është opinion juaj lidhur me mënyrën që NLA (National Liberation Army) në Maqedonia dhe UÇK në Kosovë janë marrë me konfliktin? A janë të suksesshme? Pse? Pse jo?

15. Çfarë mendimi keni në lidhje me krijimin e një shqiptarie etnike, a është e mundur dhe si?

16. Cili është opinion juaj në lidhje me kapacitetin e shtetit Shqiptar për të mbrojtur shqiptartët në trevat jashtë shqiptarë?

17. Cilat janë dobesitë ose pengesat për Shqipërinë që të jetë një aktor i rëndësishëm në këto konflikte?

18. Si mund të kontribuojë shteti Shqiptar në zgjidhjen e këtyre konflikteve?

19. Përveç motiveve lidhur me etnicitetin në Kosovë dhe Maqedoni, a janë këto treva me rëndësi gjeopolitike për Shqipërinë? Pse? Pse jo? (If not mentioned before)

Pjesa 3-te

Opinionet e të rinjve mbi marrëdhënien e shtetit Shqiptar me grupet farefisnore

20. Cfare qasjeje po ndjek shteti Shqiptar drejt shqiptareve te Kosoves? ...Maqedonise? A I mbeshtesni politikate e tij? Pse, Pse jo?
21. Shteti Shqiptar eshte I fokusuar ne format coercive apo bashkepunuese te zgjidhjes se konfliktit, pse? (if not answered in question 17)
22. Sipas mendimit tuaj cilet jane faktoret e brendshem qe influencojne qasjen e shtetit Shqiptar drejt grupeve farefisore?
23. A mendoni se populli shqiptar i mbeshtet politikat e shtetit shqiptar ne Kosove dhe Maqedoni? Pse? Pse jo? (if not mentioned in question 20)
24. Si e ndikojne maredheniet Shqiperi- SHBA politiken e jashtme te Shqiperise dhe qasjen e saj ndaj grupeve farefisnore? (if USA mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
25. Cfare ndikimi ka procesi i integritimit ne BE ne politiken e jashtme te Shqiperise drejt grupeve farefisnore? (if EU mentioned as an actors in the conflicts)
26. Cfare opinion keni mbi mbrojtjen e te drejtave te njeriut ne Shqiperi?
27. Si e ndikon mbrojtja e te drejtave te njeriut qasjen e shtetit Shqiptar ndaj zgjidhjes se konflikteve te grupeve te tij farefisnore?
28. Si I vleresoni politikat e shtetit Shqiptar ne lidhje me grupet farefisnore dhe cfare duhet te behet ne te ardhmen sipas mendimit tuaj?
29. Si mund te kontribuojne te rinjte ne Shqiperi ne formimin e politikave te shtetit Shqiptar drejt grupeve farefisnore?

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